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# DE CLIFFORD;

OR,

## THE CONSTANT MAN.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE," "DE VERE," &c.

Cum magnis vixi, cum plebeis, cum omnibus;  
Ut homines noscerem, et meipsum imprimis.

*Dr. King's Epitaph upon Himself.*

R. P. Ward.

IN THREE VOLUMES

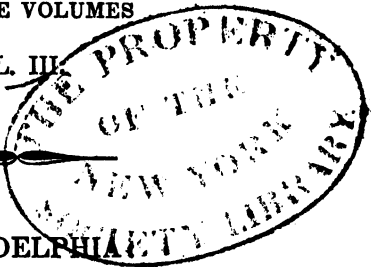
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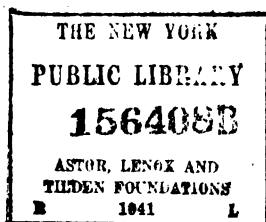
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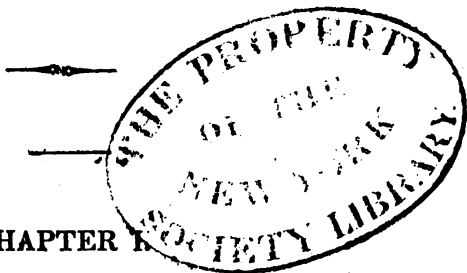
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# DE CLIFFORD ;

OR

## THE CONSTANT MAN.



### CHAPTER I.

A MAN OF QUALITY NONDESCRIPT.—MORE OF GRANVILLE AND LADY HUNGERFORD.—WITH THE LATTER I HAVE AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW.—OF THE FEELING SHE DISPLAYED, AND OF THE MISTERY WHICH ACCOMPANIED IT.

If I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel.

I am he who was so love-shaked ;  
I pray you tell me your remedy.

SHAKSPEARE.—*As You Like It.*

THE heroes of my last chapter have too long detained me from persons of more consequence to my own heart and mind. For such a friend as Granville, I have neglected the mention of him too long. He came to me often, and did me much good in polishing off Oxford rust, and putting me *au fait* of things and characters which were quite new to me.

I rewarded him by talking to him, and allowing him to talk to me, of Lady Hungerford. In this I had a fellow-feeling, for it was evident he loved that superior person both



with fondness and admiration, yet with very little hope, even had he been in circumstances to address her.

When I combated this, and observed upon the complacency with which she always spoke to, and of him, he would shake his head, and say, it was merely her good-nature towards a person who she could not help seeing was her slave.

"For," said he, "with a thousand in her train, I acquit her of all coquetry. I only wish her nature was not so kind. Could I think myself ill-used, as you once said in regard to Bertha, I possibly might get free. You have, however, got free without ill-usage."

"If I have done so," returned I, with a sigh, "it has been from despair; but you have shown me no reason why you should despair. You have at least never been dismissed."

"I have never been delirious," answered he, smiling, "in the presence of a waiting gentle-woman."

This produced much talk both of Bertha and Lady Hungerford, in which Granville owned to me that his hopes, or rather his feelings (for hopes he had none), were as chimerical as mine had been for Bertha.

"That fatal winter at Paris!" said he. "Who could see her, the admired, *par excellence*, for elegance, *tournure*, and brilliancy, even in that brilliant capital, and not love, though despairing of success? Pronounced by the queen (herself a perfect judge) the most perfect woman of fashion among all the foreigners; loved by her own sex, idolized by ours; courted in marriage by more than one noble of the highest rank in France;—who could fail to give her his heart, and drink the sweet poison of her beauty and manners, though he knew it would destroy him? Yet are those manners and that beauty the least of her attractions. It is the mental charm of her conversation, her sense and rectitude, that take and imprison you, so sweetly, that from your prison you do not even wish to get free. In the youth of Bertha

‘There is a prone and speechless dialect,  
Such as moves men;’

but this maturer, though still lovely lady, hath also,

‘Prosperous art,  
When she will play with reason and discourse,  
And well she can persuade.’

You yourself have felt her persuasive eloquence."

"That is not more warmly said than true," observed I; "and I now fully understand what it was that shielded your heart from one who so entirely filled mine."

"Perhaps," said he, "we are not of the same dispositions in these points. You are little used yet to the world yourself, and a retired beauty, like that lovely, secluded flower we talk of, has therefore more charms for you than for one ten years older, and almost *blase* by his knowledge of artificial life. I love diamonds, you a simple rose. I acknowledge Bertha is the sweetest rose that ever bloomed; but allow on your part, that Honora is the most polished diamond that ever shone."

"I cannot stand this poetry," said I; "I who am a poor matter-of-fact secretary; but carry it to Lady Hungerford, who is herself full of poetry and genius, and she will accept it; probably reward you for it."

"Reward *me*!" exclaimed he. "Yes; probably as great men used formerly to reward poor poets for dedication, with a few guineas. How little more, in comparison, am I to Lady Hungerford, than one of these poor poets?"

"Away," returned I, "with this humility. You are nobly born as well as herself."

"Yes! and a younger brother."

"Ride well!"

"And can scarce afford a horse."

"Dance well!"

"And thirty-one and a half years old."

"What then?"

"I have heard her say no man should dance after thirty, or woman after four-and-twenty."

"The *girls* of twenty-five must be much obliged to her," said I. "Of course she never dances herself?"

"Never in England. But in France, Terpsichore herself not more graceful."

"More of Parnassus still!"

"How can it be helped, when she is herself a Muse?"

In such conversation as this, Granville sometimes beguiled an hour with me; and seeing that it gave him a sort of melancholy pleasure, I never repressed it, any more than the castles of hope which he sometimes built, when he thought his mistress distinguished him from other men, or Lord Cas-

leton, who was his political patron, flattered him with the expectation of an embassy, which had been for some time designed for him.

It may be supposed that the interest I felt for Granville made me take every opportunity that offered, to penetrate, if I could, Lady Hungerford's sentiments concerning him; but except great suavity in talking of, and a rallying tone in talking to him, I could observe nothing particular.

Meantime, I made use freely of his experience, in training me on to the knowledge I so much wanted of the men and manners in which I was now to be daily conversant. For though I certainly, as I said, progressed even out of doors, and, in the closet, had the delight of finding I gave more and more satisfaction to Lord Castleton, yet there hourly sprang up things, situations, and characters, which wanted more elucidation than my hitherto secluded life enabled me to unravel.

I have mentioned, in the case of the Lord Petronius, which I had by Granville's assistance pretty well made out, how it was possible, in this country, for a mere inefficient voluptuary by dint of connexions and a fashionable reputation, to be placed in the rank of a minister. But there was also another object of my study in another peer, in whom two most inconsistent qualities seemed so blended, that, to me, he was an absolute riddle.

The first time I saw this nobleman was at one of the evening parties at Lord Castleton's, where were many grandees, foreign ministers, and ladies of the court. Nothing could exceed his lofty demeanour. Scarcely did he vouchsafe a word even to an ambassador, nor more than a slight drop of his chin to ladies of the highest rank. To one of the royal dukes alone did he seem to unbend and listen with complacency.

He was majestic in person, rich in his apparel, and, in truth, became his garter well.

As he had vouchsafed a conversation of at least five minutes to Lady Hungerford, the only person in the room, except his royal highness, who had detained him so long, I ventured, when he left her, to ask who he was.

The Duke of Glenmore," whispered she, "the proudest man in England, but also the greatest politician and party

man. From your situation, Lord Castleton will no doubt present you to him."

Lord Castleton, who had just joined her, said laughingly, "I am not sure if I dare, unless he hold out a signal for it himself; which, when Mr. Clifford has got a little deeper into party, he probably will. To-night I see is one of his proud nights, so perhaps we had better defer the attempt."

All this appeared to me a mystery, which I did not know how to expound, especially when I afterwards saw the duke, with an air of eagerness totally the reverse of what he had hitherto shewn, take the arm of a person, by no means one of the distinguished, but with something even vulgar in his appearance. Leading him into a recess of an inner room, he commenced a conversation with him in which he seemed much interested, and which lasted full ten minutes.

Lady Hungerford saw this as well as I, and laughingly said, "Mr. Hoskyns is a lucky man; that is more than one of us poor ladies could get from his grace in a whole week."

I asked what it could mean, when she referred me to Granville, who had just joined us.

"Ask this gentleman," said she, playfully, "who certainly understands men, though he says he cannot make out women. But if he can make out the duke, he will, indeed, be a great Apollo."

She said this as the duke passed out of the room to his carriage, which was called, and we heard him saying to his satellite (for such he seemed), "Hoskyns, I am going to White's, and will drop you by the way;" upon which they both disappeared.

"I think," said Granville, addressing Lady Hungerford, "I can answer the call you make upon me without any great boast of an insight into the characters of men, though, as you truly hint, my penetration in regard to women may be questionable."

"I am glad you at least see your errors," returned the lady, with some quickness, "after your rudeness this morning. By the way, I had forgot I had resolved not to speak to you."

Granville bowed, and with an air of melancholy, though also of galantry, replied:

"May you ever forget such cruel resolves. I was almost afraid of venturing here to-night, in the fear that you would

execute them, and I shall ever feel obliged to the duke for having occasioned this forgetfulness."

"Well," replied she, "as I have been surprised into it, I may as well forgive you, but only provided you retract."

"For such an object I certainly will," answered Granville, "*all but the last line.*"

"Very prettily said," observed the lady ;" and I thought her colour heightened as she smiled ; and she smiled beautifully.

Meantime I was *in nubibus*, and could only see there was something particular between them, which, thinking I had no business with, I walked to another part of the room, where the *belle* of the season, a Miss Falconer, with the mien of a sultana, and eyes like basilisks, outshining the many diamonds that adorned her, had, as usual, gathered a large portion of the company to gaze, criticise, and admire her.

"I hope you are one of the adorers," said Lady Hungerford, when I rejoined her. "Here is Mr. Granville will not stir a step towards her, I suppose knowing and fearing the danger, like a discreet man as he is."

"There may be mettle more attractive," observed Granville, looking with great feeling at Lady Hungerford, "which may better account for it ; for, as for discretion, I wish I was what you have been so good as to call me. I fear I am too fond of the *last line* to deserve it."

Puzzled again with this sort of watchword, I no more joined in the conversation, which, however, Granville explained, and enlightened me as to the duke, in a conference I had with him the next day. For walking by White's in my way to Whitehall, I saw the Duke of Glenmore installed at the window amid a throng of aristocrats, and seemingly much in his element. Of a sudden, Hoskyns, and a man apparently still more ordinary than himself (both in looks and manners), passed by, and the duke instantly darted after them into the street, abandoning all his fine friends to engage in an eager conversation with them, which lasted long after they had got into the park, whither I had followed them, in my way to the office.

In the morning papers I had read that the duke had the day before given a grand political dinner, over which he presided "with his usual grace and popularity," and at which,

for among many lords and gentlemen, were Mr. Hoskyns, M. P.,  
I and Mr. Gubbins, M. P. Mr. Gubbins, I afterwards found,  
was this other companion whom the duke had joined, and  
seemed most familiar with them both.

e. I own I wished much to make out this riddle ; but Gran-  
ville, whom I found waiting for me at the office, solved it a  
few minutes afterwards. Upon my observing that I wonder-  
ed the duke could be reckoned proud when he seemed so fa-  
miliar with such ordinary persons as I had just seen him with,  
and that the papers even talked of his popularity—

“ Yes ; he is popular,” said Granville, “ but then it is in  
his own way, for he is proud as Lucifer at the same time.”

“ Can that be ?” asked I.

“ In appearance, not,” said he, “ and yet compatible ; for  
it depends upon what is the character of the popularity, and  
what of the pride. For example, his popularity is all of a  
public, his pride of a private, nature. He will attend all pub-  
lic meetings, and be very condescending with his party and  
followers, will even flatter them in speeches, and give them  
dinners. The duke’s fort indeed is the management of a party,  
and his highest ambition parliamentary influence ; for which  
purpose he would rather be the arbiter of an election than of  
the fate of Europe. His dinners, therefore (of one of which  
you saw the account,) are all party dinners, got up for the  
occasion ; sometimes at the Clarendon ; not in his house ; or  
if there, no one can penetrate from the dining-room into the  
interior. Even the leaders among his supporters know him  
not in domestic life, unless they are of his own class. He  
has his room of business, but all his other rooms are closed even  
to the men ; but as to their wives and daughters, did any  
body ever know the duchess open her saloon to them, or  
notice them any where but at the saturnalia of an election  
ball ? Though they even happen to be of a class to go to  
court, if not of the initiated, to speak to them would be hor-  
ror ; to look at them, loss of caste. With all his smiles, in  
this the duke is as impenetrable as his wife ; who, with her  
daughters, in regard to his most zealous friends (except, as I  
say, they are of his own rank), is as closely sealed to them as  
if in a harem.”

e. “ He pays, then, it should seem,” said I, “ a high price for  
his popularity ?”

"Every man pays for an expensive hobby," returned Granville, "and this is his. I have seen him, like Bolingbroke, on his horse—

'Who his aspiring rider seemed to know—'

riding with a knot of political club-men in the park, and seemingly hail-fellow-well-met with them all. Perhaps that very night he met some of them at the Opera, and avoided them, or was suddenly struck blind, for fear of being forced to recognise them."

"How ridiculous," cried I, with a laugh, "and how contemptible; I would rather dig in my garden, and live upon potatoes."

I own all this astonished me, though I began to remember what the sagacious Fothergill had told me to the same effect, and it soon grew too familiar a custom among what are called public men ever to be noticed again.

Indeed, one of the first things I remarked in this world of fashion and politics, so new to me, was, that it by no means followed from the closest intimacies, nay apparent attachments, between leaders and subalterns, that there should be the smallest approach to even acquaintance between their families. Going once with Lord Castleton to dine with Lord Tancred, at his villa, where we found some young ladies had just arrived before us—

"You have company?" said Lord Castleton, to one of the daughters of the house.

"No;" said the young lady, "no company, only two or three of those odd people that my father thinks it right to invite now and then, because their father and he are so connected in business."

But even in this, be it observed, Lord Tancred stood alone, and was quizzed for it, to which he good-naturedly submitted,

After this discussion, Granville and myself fell upon other matters, and being not a little interested to understand the mysterious allusions between him and Lady Hungerford the evening before, he readily explained, nay seemed to wish to do so, in order to ask my opinion.

It seems that in the morning visit which he paid to Berkeley Square, he found the lady alone, except that she was oc-

cupied with Pope and his characters of women, which immediately and naturally produced a discussion of the subject. She appeared very indignant with the poet, whom she accused of a total ignorance of the sex, knowing nothing about them, she said, but what Patty Blount and Lady Mary Wortley Montague (neither of them the best authority) chose to tell him.

"As if," said Lady Hungerford, "there ever was such a character as Chloe, of whom he inconsistently says,

"With every pleasing, every prudent part,  
Say what can Chloe want—she wants a heart,"

"I, to try her," said Granville, "observed I thought it the commonest feature in the character of the sex—adding, it was lucky for us—for, if she had a heart, woman would be so irresistible, that no man could ever be his own master, but must crouch at her feet, and be beaten like a spaniel."

"Which you are to proud to do," observed the lady.

"Not so," replied I; 'for if I really met with a heart which could respond to mine—could a woman really feel any love but the two sorts which Pope says absorb her,

"The love of pleasure or the love of sway."

no votary could feel so resigned or devoted to heaven's will, as I to the heaven of her affection.'

"Very fine," observed Lady Hungerford (as I thought with a distant air); 'but according to you, then, this capable heart of yours never met with one that was worthy of it.'

"Rather," replied I, 'I have always been too little gifted to inspire the feeling, without which I could never love; especially among beings whom the poet describes as so changeable, that they "have no characters at all." This he does, you know, upon the best authority—the cleverest of her sex—Lady Mary herself. Nay, it is to this inconstancy that the satirical rogue ascribes half their powers:—

"Ladies like variegated tulips shew,  
'Tis to their changes half their charms we owe.'"

"I should be sorry," said Lady Hungerford, still more gravely, 'if this were your real opinion. I would never open



my doors to you to insult me again ; but I know it is not, and I should like, therefore, to know what it really is.'

" ' Really, honestly, and frankly ?' asked I.

" ' Yes.'

" ' And you will promise not to be offended ?'

" ' *C'est selon,*' answered she, and I thought she grew more particular still.

" ' Why then,' said I, ' take it from an apostrophe of Segur, who at least was sufficiently interested about these "Cynthias of a minute."'

" ' Postively,' cried the lady, ' I will not admit of French authority. I deny that Segur, any more than Pope, knew any thing really about us.'

" ' Is this nothing,' asked I, ' or is it the truth ?' and I repeated with animation, I believe, for I felt unusually bold :—'*Assemblage incomprehensible de vertus et de vices ; de bonnes qualites, et de defauts ; de courage, et de faiblesse ; mais possedant, au plus haut degre, l'art de tout embellir.*'

" ' Tolerably fair, that last,' observed the lady, seeing that I paused, ' but I suppose something terrible is coming,'

" I went on :—'*Qui dit vous connoitre, est un sot.*'

" ' Bad.'

" ' *Qui vous croit, est un dupe.*'

" ' Worse.'

" ' *Qui se livre a vous——*'

" ' Shocking !' exclaimed my lady, half offended ; ' you need not go on ; I would rather not hear any more abuse.'

" ' Abuse !' cried I ; ' hear me out :—*Qui se livre a vous, est heureux.*'

" ' Believe me," continued Granville, " when I had finished, all my boldness forsook me. I thought I had gone too far. I could scarcely look at Lady Hungerford to ascertain, if I could, how she took this critical quotation ; and, in fact, having said (I thought rather coldly) that the *last line* endeavoured to compensate for the rest, she changed the subject, to which I did not dare return."

" This, then, is the last line," said I, " which she last night allowed you to retain ?"

" I suppose so."

" Good ; but did nothing else pass ?"

" Very little ; merely a common-place, such as—' I sup-

pose you will be at Lord Castleton's to-night?' and I took my departure, leaving her, I thought, more grave and distant towards me than ever I remember."

"I am not so experienced as you," observed I, "but I should not augur ill from this gravity; it at least shews there is not indifference, which is the next step to emotion; and emotion once created, may turn to love, as well as to hatred; while a leaden indifference is always fatal."

Granville stared, and at last exclaimed, "Admirably settled! But where the devil did you get this knowledge? Not at Queen's; not from Fothergill, I am certain; nor from the Oxford damsels, I'll answer for it. Yet these are all the sources you had upon such subjects when I left you. But I forgot. Lady Hungerford herself has taken you under her guidance, and perhaps has instructed you in more secrets than that of the *parfaitement bonne compagnie*."

I thought my friend had here raised in himself some little hope that I had made out something in his favour from his mistress, so I undeceived him; but it produced in myself the bold desire to do so if I could, or at least, if possible, to sound her, though at a distance, on his account; and the constant access which this gracious lady still allowed me to her presence, I thought might afford an opportunity for it.

I say *still* allowed me, because, though, as my instructress in the ways of the *beau monde*, she was pleased to say that now wanted very little tuition, I own I was so happy at school that I by no means wished for holidays, or to take my degree; and what with Lord Castleton's good opinion of me, what with her own good-nature, and what, perhaps, was something, our constant talk, more or less, of Granville, in our meetings, she by no means rescinded the liberty she had allowed me of waiting upon her.

At these visits, as I have said, Granville was always more or less mentioned, and she would often talk of the firmness of his mind.

Pity it was, she one day said, that he was not his elder brother, and then, though perhaps a little too old, he would be a charming match for his pretty cousin, her darling Bertha.

At these words I grew embarrassed, particularly as she looked at me so archly, and, as I thought, so searchingly, that I could not help thinking, though with no very precise

idea of her intention, that she had some inkling of the devotion I had formerly shewn, and wished to discover whether, and how *far*, it continued.

Ladies, whatever their rank, and with all their superiorities of talent and genius, which make them seemingly above all common-place feelings, are yet always women where a love-tale is concerned; and Lady Hungerford could not have been in the same house with the loquacious Mrs. Margaret without hearing something of the adventure with poachers, and the consequent unfortunate delirium.

I parried her speech, as well as I could; and having been now, for some time, allowed all the ease of a friend, I resolved to pursue the subject of Granville, by saying, that I thought I could be certain that such a match as she had alluded to would never take place.

"How?" said Lady Hungerford, rather hurriedly; "you speak as from authority. Do you know? Have you heard of any engagement? Do you think Miss Hastings has placed her affections elsewhere?"

"No;" returned I, "but *he* has."

This was pretty bold; perhaps indiscreet in regard to Granville; yet it was for his sake I said it, for I wanted to discover whether it would produce any, and what effect upon this high-bred, but still unsophisticated lady.

Practised as she was, and firm in the government of her countenance, a transient gleam came over her features, and it was not without an indication of, at least, curiosity, that she asked me the ground of my opinion.

"As a friend, much interested that he should be happy," said she, "I wish to know."

She said this so naturally, that I was rather baffled, though I thought I would still go on with my experiment, particularly when she farther asked whether he had been captivated at home or abroad.

"Oh!" said I, "both;" but, roguishly looking at her, I added, "I believe chiefly at Paris."

Here she was certainly off her guard, for she absolutely coloured, and observed—

"I must not ask you to reveal secrets, but I think I know the lady—the Countess Montalembert?"

"No;" said I, with a boldness that astonished myself, "it was a viscountess."

Whether I looked so significantly on saying this, that she discovered what I meant, I know not, but with an almost affectation of gaiety (certainly a gaiety not natural to her), she immediately said,

"Well, well, I don't wish to know; and here we have been both doing wrong; I, in prying into secrets I have no right to; *you*, in betraying, if indeed you know them. I am afraid you are a very false man, Mr. De Clifford, and I shall tell your friend not to trust you. I am sorry, however, that poor Bertha has so little chance. I suppose you will, as in friendship bound, inform her of it."

If I had at all discomposed Lady Hungerford, she now had her revenge; for, seriously hurt by this allusion to a friendship so long at an end, and feeling bitterly that I was banished for ever from the confidence I was supposed to enjoy, I faltered rather than said,

"Indeed, madam, though your supposition does me honour, it is one I cannot pretend to. I have not even seen Miss Hastings these two years; and but for your kind communication I should never have dreamt I was remembered, having so little right to it, by any of the family."

My lip quivered as I said this; all my courage, which had led me to be almost impertinent, was annihilated, and my experiment on Lady Hungerford reverberated on my own head.

Her real good-nature now came to my assistance, and she said, with the kind consideration which belonged to her,

"Nay, Mr. De Clifford, this must not be; I cannot permit your humility, unaffected as I really believe it is, to make you suppose, what it is even ungrateful in you to imagine—that your early friends are so capricious or so unjust. Mr. Hastings himself, any more than his dear daughter, is not a person to throw away his opinions—favourable to-day, lost to-morrow. I told you the first moment I saw you, that they remembered you with interest, and the letters I have received from Bertha, since I informed her of our acquaintance, and your position with Lord Castleton, to say nothing of your progress, would convince you that neither she nor her father are such changeable beings as you fancy them."

I felt myself agitated to a still greater degree by this ac-

count, and knew not how to look, when this kind, as well as accomplished lady, thought it right to endeavour to put me more at my ease, by telling me the extent of what she knew.

"Come," said she, "I see you are under constraint from doubts, and perhaps fears, of what I do or do not know. I will tell you, therefore, frankly, that I know all the night adventure with the poachers, and all that passed in the delirium occasioned by your consequent illness. I know, too, all your expressed opinions of the possibility of loving without hope, and am in possession of your pretty verses on that subject. What is more, I know all that in your agitation escaped you in your last interview with Bertha, which that feeling and just-minded girl told me, with tears in her eyes.

"Tears!" cried I, in greater agitation than ever. "Tears in such an angel, from such a cause!"

"Yes," said Lady Hungerford, "for the tears of benevolence (and your emotion obliges me to tell you they were no more) will easily be made to flow from a good, and particularly a youthful heart. Now do not let this plunge you into the dreadful mistake of supposing that this feeling of Miss Hastings proceeded from any thing but what I have called it, *benevolence*. Nor, did I think you like the common run of young men, a coxcomb, would I tell you this, or more than this—that the tone of your last interview convinced her that a delirium may often indicate foregone conclusions, and though apparent madness, may be real truth."

"And hence, no doubt," said I, rather stiffly, "that a love which I had not been able to conceal, and which it would be folly to attempt to disguise from a penetration like your ladyship's, was the cause of all that change of behavior which I felt so cruelly at the time, and the bitterness of which has continued in memory ever since."

I thought Lady Hungerford was a little affected at this; but seeing the necessity for the most clear understanding on my part of what she meant, and meant not to convey, she assumed a grave and impressive air, and with something like solemnity said,

"I trust you are too just, and too little egotistical, to misconstrue what I said into more than what I really meant—a desire to correct an error under which you seemed to be laboring—that mine and your friends had in the least chan-

ged towards you. Having never been more than a *friend*—it being impossible, even if you were Lord De Clifford himself, that she *could* be more—Bertha is so still : and when I described her keen regrets, I may say her sorrow, at perceiving you laboring under a most unavailing passion, which might end in your misery, I meant anything but to encourage you to think she could ever entertain it. Believe me, who possess all her confidence, this is wholly out of the question, were you even a prince of the blood.”

This, as I thought unnecessary addition, made me shudder, and I replied (moodily, and I fear proudly),

“Your ladyship need be under no such apprehension. I perfectly well know the distance between Miss Hastings and myself ; nor was it necessary to remind me of it : for, of the total absence on her part of any thing like encouragement I have even been too well convinced, to think that this distance can be overleapt.”

“Honorably said, most distant Sir, and most lofty-minded gentleman,” replied my fair instructress ; “and, this being so, I feel perfectly safe in having made you this confidence. Do me the justice, however, to believe, that it is for your own sake I have spoken, and therefore, if I tell you that the bar against you is insuperable, you ought to thank me. In return, I hope I need not tell you that your secret with me is safe ; though, indeed, no man need be ashamed of loving such a creature as Bertha. Time and absence, however, and still more, perhaps, the usual remedy of very young men—admiration of another—may do much for you. For the latter, at least, there is abundant scope, at this brilliant time of the year.

“By the way,” added she, “I saw you rather occupied last night with that very brilliant person, Miss Falconer, who, though this is only her first season, has already turned the heads of half the town. She has as much fortune, they say, as beauty ; and her *tourmure*, you see, is perfect. Now, suppose you try a little experiment upon yourself, and see whether this superb sultana (a very contrast to Miss Hastings) may not cause some diversion in your feelings.”

Though she said this sportingly, and, as she afterwards allowed, to see whether I *could* be diverted or not, I did not

like Lady Hungerford for this; and said perhaps somewhat resentfully,

"Your ladyship does well to laugh at my very impertinent feelings, and has indeed said well, that these two ladies are a contrast to one another. Oh, how great a one!"

"Be it so," returned Lady Hungerford; and (again to try me) she observed that Miss Falconer in the opinion of all judges, from her singularly fine manners, taste, and elegance, would, she thought, be preferred by everybody, to a girl brought up in the country, however highly allied.

"That may be, madam," said I; "but an illustration from your favorite science of music shall be my answer. A simple but touching and pathetic melody, which thrills the heart, and perhaps fills the eyes with tears, may for a time be eclipsed by an elaborate, magnificent sinfonia, full of imposing and learned accompaniments; and so a beautiful girl, decked only in the simple charms of a sweet nature, may seem veiled for a time, when a court comes sweeping by, in all the pomp of majesty and gold. But as the charm of the melody returns upon the sense, and is cherished long after the scientific and imposing sinfonia is forgotten; so the beautiful daughter of nature, I have supposed, renews and maintains her place in the heart long after all the finery of the court has ceased to be remembered."

"Upon my word, fair Sir," said Lady Hungerford, "there might be a worse exposition, and I could pardon much imprudence to so much elegance of fancy as well as constancy. Nor am I sorry to have sounded you by what I said of a diversion, since it lets me into the truth of what your friend Mr. Granville believed was once a ruling passion, but he thought it had subsided. I grieve to think his opinion was not well founded. But there must be an end to imprudence, when it swells into madness; and though I dare say you will hate me for telling you so, it is absolute madness to foster this affection. The bar I have told you is insuperable—were you as rich as you are well born, you could not succeed—the passion *must* be conquered."

"Be assured, madam," replied I, somewhat moved, "it would not be easy for me to hate you for anything, much less for what, I trust I am not too presumptuous in thinking proceed from good will towards me, however unworthy of it."

"Nay," returned my protectress (for I cannot help calling her so), "do not disqualify yourself, but rather turn your qualifications to account. Mr. Granville informed me he had once told you there was more than one Miss Hastings in the world; and, much as I love and admire her, I agree with him. I will not recur again to a *diversion* to which you are properly superior, and to which I only adverted as a trial, for which I ought to ask pardon. But there are other objects, not less intense, more prudent, and even more honourable in your position; I mean the pursuit of your ambition, so well begun, and the study of the world in which you may be hereafter conspicuous. These the indulgence of this secret passion may cruelly thwart. How many thousands of young men would give their little fingers to be where you are, at the expense, easy to them, of eradicating even a stronger attachment than this!"

"Stronger! madam!" exclaimed I. "I am sorry you think so meanly of me."

And seizing my hat, and with a deep sigh, I took my leave so suddenly and unceremoniously that I found myself in the street before Lady Hungerford could offer any thing in reply. And so ended an experiment conceived and made to promote the happiness of another, but which lamentably conducted to the deterioration of my own.

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## CHAPTER II.

IN ORDER TO RECOVER FROM MY RUINOUS ATTACHMENT I THROW MYSELF MORE AND MORE UPON THE TOWN, IN THE REVIEW OF ITS DIFFERENT CHARACTERS.—A DINNER AT LORD CASTLETON'S, WHERE I MEET A GREAT CRITIC.—CHARACTER OF MR. JOHN PARAGRAPH.

What foolish masters taught you these manners, Sir John?

SHAKESPEARE.—2 *Henry IV.*

THE interview with Lady Hungerford, recorded in the last chapter, did me no good, and I felt rightly served for endea-



youing to discover a lady's secret, when I had one of my own which I wished to conceal, if possible, from myself; for, from the thousand scenes of another sort in which I was now engaged, I had begun to hope that I was really independent of that absorbing feeling which had tinged all my early years, with some pleasure indeed, but more pain.

'Tis true I was affected and pleased with the thought that I was so kindly remembered as Lady Hungerford described; but the very non-concealment of that kindness, with no intimation of any thing more, proved that I was nothing to Bertha. Had there been any thing warmer, she would not have so frankly confessed her *friendship*; she would have been afraid of herself. This I felt, from I know not what sort of intuition: so far had I advanced without instruction in the knowledge of the heart.

I am ashamed to say how wayward I felt towards Lady Hungerford after this last visit. Though I could not by any means make it out, I wished to think myself unkindly used, and abstained from repeating my calls for a week: nay, I excused myself from one of her *soirees*, and when I met her unexpectedly at a third place, and rather looked to be reproached for it, to my mortification I was treated exactly with the same affability and ease as if I had shewn my usual assiduities.

I was half angry at this no change, and, like Sir Peter in the play, said to myself, "She may break my heart, but she sha'nt keep her temper."

Meantime, I thought the experiment I had made in regard to her feeling for Granville had succeeded; and that the strong hint I had given her of his devotion had far from displeased her. It is certain she did any thing but keep her resolution of not speaking to him again; the "last line" seemed always the last thing remembered, and was remembered with pleasure.

The effect was visible upon himself. All his agreeable qualities—his talent—his tact, and good breeding shone out in double lustre, and he wanted nothing but his embassy to enable him to undertake a siege in form.

I confess I envied him; and in the midst of business, pleasure, and dissipation, I became, as formerly, solitary and sad; though not, as formerly, fond of my chain, for I really

wished to break it. My friends thought me like Richard, when about to fight for his kingdom, and noticed that

“ I had not that alacrity of spirit,  
And cheer of mind, that I was wont to have.”

And yet there was nothing in Lady Hungerford's caution or communication, that ought to have added to whatever uneasiness I had before undergone. It was not new to me, that I was to have no hope for Bertha. I had, indeed, thought I had settled that matter forever, and had even been light of heart when I first came to London.

Nor did the associations thrown around Lady Hungerford at all sadden my recollections, or prevent my delight in her conversation. It was the intimation she gave that I was still so kindly remembered where it did me good to think myself forgotten, that disturbed me. For by reviving tenderness (never indeed entirely suppressed), it excited a tumult once more in my feelings, by no means soothed by the accompanying assurance that those feelings were vain.

I tried again to summon my pride to aid me against both Bertha and her friend who had so lectured me. I did not understand, much less like, the positive tone assumed, as it were expressly, by Lady Hungerford on this occasion. In particular, I could not make out, and was disposed to resent, the seemingly *gratuitous* assumption, that were I Lord De Clifford himself, or even a prince of the blood, I should not succeed. What right had Lady Hungerford to assert this? *Why* assert it, except unnecessarily to humble me?

I became downright angry. But I could not keep my anger long, for my admiration of this charming person predominated over even a sense of injury; and as for Bertha, all pride fell before her, and I felt that to her I was “pigeon-livered and lacked gall.”

Luckily, at this time, a press of business in the state, and a press of engagements in the world of fashion, came so far to my aid, that I had little time to brood. Lord Castleton gave me employment enough in the former, and the latter was greatly encouraged, on a good natural principle, as she told me herself, by Lady Hungerford. I became what is called *bien repandu*. I wrote all the morning, or saw courtiers and

applicants, and made precis for the king, which he was pleased to approve, as he told Lord Castleton himself, of which, being one of the best judges in his own dominions, I was not a little proud.

In the afternoon I rode in the park, amid a gay and increasing throng of acquaintance of both sexes; many of them rising young men, some actually risen and the women of the most finished *tournure*.

In these parties Lady Hungerford and Granville, who constantly attended her, were conspicuous, and by the consequence which their protection gave me, made me appear in the world any thing but a decayed gentleman.

As to themselves, the thing seemed decided in public opinion, and they were given without reserve to each other. I was much catechized upon it; and though I could not answer, because I knew nothing, it was taken as a proof of discretion, auguring a prudence which would in the end assuredly lead to something great.

The opportunities of knowing the world were thus multiplied, and what amused me was, to observe the deference shewn me by many whom I thought great men at Oxford, because of their horses and large expenditure compared with my own (though perhaps the whole of their fortune), but who in those days stood studiously aloof from such little men as I.

These men formed a class which an observer of the world would do well to note. They were the Mr. Wiggenses and Mr. Sprigginses of life; sons of little merchants, or practitioners in the professions, who had bred or intended to breed them to their own vocations; but leaving them small fortunes, from three to five thousand pounds apiece, which sufficing to their immediate views, they would not submit to either the restraint or what they thought the disgrace of business, but resolved to burst forth men of fashion at once.

This, as they imagined, consisted in being able to keep a good horse, with perhaps (for it was not universal), a groom; to ride regularly in the ring, know every coach with a coronet, be a Bond Street loungeur (then a great town character), and lodge in its neighbourhood. The richer ones frequented the coffee-houses there, and sometimes even dined at them. These were at all proper times to be seen at Tattersall's and never missed Epsom.

But the happiness and dignity of these gentry were consummate, if they could regularly attend the Opera of a Saturday night, where one of them was a most amusing study—indeed perfectly unique; for, having a few acquaintances of his own of the higher sort, and, by dint of an apprenticeship to it of some years, having acquired a knowledge of the names and persons of most of the people of rank, he was to be seen and heard regularly echoing the announcement of every carriage as it was called, generally accompanying it with some remark regarding the motions of the owners. Thus, if Lady D.'s carriage was vociferated, he would loudly repeat it, with the addition of "stops the way;" if Lady E.'s, he would cry out, "gone some time;" if Lord F.'s, "gone to Brooks's with Lord G.;" if Lady H.'s, "has not been here to-night."

Townsend (then a young minister of police) complained bitterly of this person, for rivalling him, as he said, in his vocation; and once said, with his characteristic liberty of speech, meaning really to compliment him, "What an excellent police officer was spoilt, Sir, when you were made a gentleman." The laugh occasioned by this innuendo kept away the aspirant of fashion two whole nights.

What became of this useless order of beings, as they grew older, I never could exactly make out. It is certain 'most of them disappeared, though some continued to be seen lounging on "the shady side of Pall Mall" in summer, or expelling smoke from their cigars in winter' neither advancing nor retrograding; the only alteration being from youth to age.

Now and then one of them might contrive to make a comfortable marriage, and take his place among his sister dowagers at the card table; but most passed their lives in useless, monotonous, and irrespectable celibacy: not put to shame by any notorious vice, but total strangers to any active virtue.

Those whose annuities were of a smaller kind altogether disappeared, and were scattered about the world, glad to escape into the colonies, or, if they had interest, into some public office, where I have sometimes detected them, rather to their dismay. But again, "*Vogue la galere.*"

I could write a volume on the different characters I met with; some at the clubs, and some at the tables of the great, particularly at Lord Castleton's, where, as his *aide-de-camp* (the title he gave me), I had my regular place. The parties

were, as may be supposed, chiefly political ; but they admitted, from the taste and character of the host, of a mixture of rank and conditions, from the *elite* of the *haute noblesse*, to the untitled, but talented man of genius, in letters, or the liberal arts. The conversation, therefore, was often rich and interesting, and generally agreeable ; nor, with such a field for it, did I forget Lady Hungerford's advice, to endeavour to banish what it was madness to think of, in the pictures of life thus presented to me.

At one of these dinners, composed of company such as I have described, I was greatly amused, and edified too, by meeting a new sort of character, of whose very existence I had hitherto been ignorant. Granville, who was in general, from his knowledge of the wits, men of letters, and critics of the time, entrusted by Lord Castleton with the task of selecting his guests of this description, had brought this person to the party, to all of whom (at least, those of a higher degree) he seemed a perfect stranger.

Yet everybody had heard of the eminent critic, Mr. John Paragraph ; although nobody knew what he had been until he blazed forth as one of the directors of the public taste, which he condescended to guide in a periodical publication. Perhaps he had been, like myself, a decayed gentleman ; though, unlike myself, he had been ten years on the town. Hence, on the strength of a considerable portion of verjuice in his composition, and impenetrable impudence in scattering it, whether in print or conversation, he became a first-rate character in the walk he had chosen.

Mr. Paragraph was eminent for a natural slang, which passed, with vulgar people, for wit, and with the weak and timid, for overpowering ability. " Yet I have long," said Granville, who gave me this account, " taken measure of his understanding and acquirements, and even as what he pretends to be, a critic, have found him below mediocrity ; but, as a man who has either the mind, manners, or literature of a gentleman, he is not to be named. For the fellow has not a feeling of liberality in his whole carcase ; not a sentiment of poetry, a spark of imagination, or the commonest knowledge of history, still less of the nature of man. Yet, having bought a press, he sets up for a critic of all work—poetical, political, historical, and ethical. He is a cormorant for praise from

his miserable hacks, whom he governs with a rod of iron ; and, what is more, he makes money by selling his praises to the weak and vain—the would-be authors and orators. If among these there are some above purchasing his puffs, he is able sometimes to force them to buy off his abuse, which they are fools enough not to see rather does them good than harm.”

“How comes it, however,” said I, “that you produce such a man ? for I hear you have invited him to dine with Lord Castleton.”

“Why, he is one of those persons, who, being free from all burthen of modesty, and revelling in their intrepidity of assurance, are so far of use, in company, that they will not let people go to sleep. I have, therefore, prevailed upon Lord Castleton, who has heard of, but never yet saw him, to let me invite him, if only to shew the sort of animal he is. You may be sure the invitation was accepted, for he is a great tuft-hunter, as well as a great feeder. A turtle would entice him anywhere, and for a plate of it he would even sell a commendation of the worst book that ever was written. But turtle from a lord, and that lord a minister, will elevate him to the third heaven ; for it is certain that his good things, if he have any, depend upon the good things on the table, and the flow of his wit upon the flow of the claret. In short, in these respects, he is an illustration of the description which Johnson gives of a third or fourth rate critic, who finds he can boil his weekly pot better by abuse than by praise.”

Granville added, moreover, that Paragraph was a most despotic monarch in his way, and a bully among all minor publishers and authors.

“In short,” said he, “it is not easy to say whether vanity, avarice, or impudence, are uppermost in his character.”

Such was the redoubtable Mr. Paragraph, whom my friend had persuaded Lord Castleton to invite to his dinner, with a view to shew him and his company what they had often heard of, but perhaps not seen—one of the self-elected rulers of public opinion.

This account of Mr. Paragraph raised both my curiosity and fear. I, however, allayed the last by resolving not to encounter him, but only to listen.

During the first course, everybody was so intent upon the business for which they had assembled, that they gave one

another little opportunity for conversation ; and I could see nothing in this terrific person but a coarse *gourmand* (such as Granville had described him), in his practical demonstration of the excellence of the turbot and turtle. Upon this he complimented my lord, as indeed he did upon every thing every minute ; not forgetting, amid a thousand private merits, the wisdom of his public measures, upon which he actually seemed disposed to pronounce a panegyric in form, for the edification of the company, had not Lord Castleton repressed it with disgust, though equivocally conveyed, by saying, in a tone which might by any one else have been taken for irony, that he never ventured to intrude such common-place business as politics upon men of *génies* and imagination.

This produced a complacent bow from the censor, who took it as a compliment, and after this instance of his tact, allowed the conversation to become general.

I thought, at first, that he felt a little subdued by the class of company in which he now, for the first time, found himself ; but was soon undeceived, for he rallied into a sort of collision with Lord Grandison, a nobleman of a certain age, and high breeding, made still more dignified by great gravity of aspect.

This lord was lamenting to Lord Castleton the death, that day, of a common friend of theirs, which he said had occasioned great grief to his nieces, the Ladies Devenish.

"Yes," said Paragraph, pertly, though not addressed by Lord Grandison, "and we may be certain their grief is genuine, for there is a new opera to-morrow, which they will not be able to attend."

"You of course know these ladies ?" observed Lord Grandison in a dry tone, and with a look of distant dignity, yet of surprise, which might have repelled a less bold person than the gallant Paragraph.

"Not I," said he, with great affectation of indifference ; "only there is a new opera to-morrow, and I thought their grief would therefore be but natural."

"Human nature is very much obliged to you," replied Lord Grandison, with still greater gravity ; "but let me advise you, Sir, when next you make an offensive observation among strangers, to be more acquainted with the subject of it than you seem to be here. I have known the Ladies Deven-

ish from their cradles, and I must be allowed to tell you their characters will by no means justify the wit you have thrown away upon them."

This rebuke had so far effect, that the critic felt uneasy, and looked round among the company for protection,—which, not finding, he absolutely seemed disconcerted, and stammered out something like an excuse; which Lord Grandison seeming to accept, by an inclination of his head, the fellow instantly recovered his familiarity, and said flippantly,

"I trust your Lordship will not bear malice, and in proof of it, will let us take a glass of wine together."

Lord Grandison immediately poured out some wine, and interchanging smiles with Lord Castleton, of indescribable contempt, but which ought to have sunk our censor to the earth, coolly drank off his glass.

A rather awkward pause ensued, and Paragraph was again silent for several minutes, but revived on Granville's mentioning a young author who had just published a poem, but which he was modest enough to say himself he was afraid would not be read.

Paragraph, here feeling in his element, exclaimed, "He may be much more afraid if it is."

"You have read the poem, then?" said Lord Castleton.

"No," cried he, "but I have reviewed it. Ha, ha, ha!"

"What astonishing talents you gentlemen of the press must have," observed Lord Castleton. "Intuition itself is nothing to you. No wonder poor authors and ministers are so kept in order by you."

Paragraph again bowed; but looking round, and finding, by a sort of smile, that the company took the thing differently from himself, he actually shewed symptoms of distress.

As for me, in my simplicity, I wondered at a state of society which could seem to admit such a person to its honors.

Granville told me afterwards he doubted the fact, that he had reviewed a book without reading, or at least looking at it; but though it compromised his integrity, the assertion sounded epigrammatic, and among his literary dependents would have certainly been thought witty.

Paragraph's non-success here delivered us again from him for a few minutes more, and he seemed under some constraint, on the conversation becoming general, and nobody speaking



to him ; for even Lord Castleton with all his politeness, had now neglected him. Rallying, however, and addressing Granville, he observed,

"I saw you last night at the great Lady Hungerford's assembly."

"Yes," replied Granville, who seldom spared him, "and I 'wondered how the devil you got there.'"

"O !" returned he, "leave me alone for getting any where I like. But, upon my word," added he, in an authoritative tone, "considering Lady Hungerford's reputation, I was sadly disappointed."

"How so ?" asked Lord Castleton, with curiosity. "Why, I own," replied Paragraph, "it was far from the *genteel* thing I expected. The rooms and music were well enough, but the company, with a few exceptions, were absolute quizzes. There is indeed an article in this morning's *World*,\* wondering whether money was taken at the door for showing them."

"Written by yourself, no doubt," said Granville.

"That's neither here nor there," answered the director of public taste ; looking, however, very conscious.

"You do my niece a great deal of honor," said Lord Castleton, with a bow of ambiguity.

"Your niece, my lord ! Good heavens ! Lady Hungerford your niece ! What a mistake. Upon my soul I did not intend it, indeed could not have known it. I am sure your lordship—that is, I beg pardon ; I assure you it shall all be set to rights immediately."

"Not the least harm's done," said Lord Castleton, with great composure ; "and Lady Hungerford is so benevolent, that if to abuse her and her parties every day will do you or your paper any good, or raise your reputation as the director of public opinion, and above all, of public *taste*, I will answer for it she will give you *carte blanche* ; so make yourself easy."

As considerable mirth ensued upon this, Paragraph did not know how to take it ; nor whether it emanated from great good-nature, or great contempt. For the first he bowed ; from fear of the last, he reddened ; and at length, receiving no relief, applied to Granville for help, exclaiming,

\* Then the most fashionable morning paper.

"My dear Granville, I am sure you will answer for it, that I could not mean the least disrespect to his lordship or Lady Hungerford, only—I really don't know how to apologize—but, God bless my soul, how late it is."

And (the pendule just then striking eleven) he rushed out of the room, his ear regaled all the way through the hall, by the hearty laughs of those he left behind him.

"I trust," said Lord Grandison, "the lesson this poor man has received will do him good."

"I doubt it," observed Lord Castleton, "from Granville's account of him; for to Granville we owe the honour he has done us to-day."

"Wait till his next paper comes out," said Granville, "before we pronounce."

The paper did come out, with a long leading article on the miserable state of English society, from the unbearable insolence of the aristocracy, particularly of those in office, and the total want of taste, elegance, and manners, in the ladies who pretend to call themselves women of fashion.

When we broke up, I said to Granville, who took me home,

"How I envy you men of the town your opportunities for knowledge. Here, in my innocence, I have been for years thinking a newspaper critic a sort of a literary god, or at least a sage and profound judge, whom all the world are bound to reverence. Can this be a specimen of them?"

"Certainly not," said Granville; for you see he is of an inferior class, who make up in impudence what they want in sense, and he shewed himself off accordingly, as an ass in fine trappings. There are, luckily, many totally opposite to him—real scholars, and real gentlemen, whom it is both pleasure and advantage to know, and whose manners are far different from those of this slimy caterpillar, who bedaubes every thing he crawls over. There are, however, too many like him in the lower classes of the press, and to study the character of one of these critics of what we call the shop, would give you both amusement and useful knowledge."

"I have heard something of it from Mr. Manners, and have been shocked with it," returned I. "I should be glad, however, to be instructed in what seems such a mystery."

"Possibly I may help you," said Granville, "by introducing you to an old fellow-gownsmen of mine, with whom I was

at Trinity, before I was of All Souls, and who called upon me the other day. His profession has been that of a critic for these last ten years; but I fear he is much the worse for wear. He can, however, tell much of the prison-house if he pleases."

"I should like to know him," said I.

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### CHAPTER III.

I HAVE A DISCOURSE WITH GRANVILLE ON THE SYSTEM OF TRADING CRITICISM.—PICTURE OF A DISTRESSED MAN OF LETTERS.

What would'st write of me, if thou should'st praise me?

Oh, gentle lady, do not put me to't, for I am nothing if not critical.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Othello*.

THE next day, eager to solve some of the difficulties as to his craft, occasioned by the meeting with Paragraph, I called upon Granville to renew the subject, and to ask him to introduce me to the friend who, he thought, could so enlighten me. He himself, however, had powers and experience to do so without aid, as will presently be seen. As to the introduction, he said he was very willing to effect it, if I would make such a journey as to Fleet-street; but that his friend lived in such a hole, he feared I should not like it.

Upon inspecting his address, it proved to be Wine Office Court, Fleet-street.

"Come," said I, "if the great Johnson did not disdain such a neighbourhood, and if the amiable, elegant Goldsmith lived in Fleet-market itself, do not let us be too nice in visiting a man of merit, only because he is lodged like them."

It was settled therefore, that we should proceed to Wine Office Court; but first, by way of proper introduction, Granville said he would tell me something of his friend's history.

His name was Graves. He had been educated and distinguished as a classic at Rugby. His father a country

apothecary, could have well provided for him in his own line, but he would not relinquish Homer for Galen; in short, he hated the shop; so he came to Trinity College with a prodigious quantity of Greek and Latin, and a total ignorance of the world. Here he was treated as a quizz, as he almost deserved, in every thing but books; yet so mild and unoffending was he, that nobody could use him ill, and the tutors and fellows all gave him respect for his scholarship. In particular, one of the fellows, the famous wit, poet, and punster of the University the Rev. T. W.—, took him by the hand; so that, when his father died, which he did just after he had taken his degree, leaving scarcely bread to his mother, and none at all to himself, Mr. W.—interested himself about his provision, and, as the college prospects were closed upon him from not being on the foundation, he advised him, on the strength of his book-knowledge, to seek it in London.

For this purpose, he gave him a recommendation for employment to a very great personage; indeed, the supposed *sovereign* of literature and criticism of that time, and who, if he had not the talent of his prototype, Smollett, had all his moroseness, and a self-sufficiency almost equal to Smollett's pride. His patron added to this a not inconsiderable loan, which the honest fellow afterwards repaid.

"His reception, or rather non-reception, by Mr. Spleenwort, at that time the king of the critical press, was so remarkable, and will give you," said Granville, "such an insight into the character of some of these *guides of the public taste*, that I cannot do better than relate it, as he related it to me.

"First, agreeably to what he had been told, that Mr. Spleenwort exacted the utmost of the ceremonial between those who seek, and those who distribute employment, Graves thought it most respectful to inclose his letter of introduction in a sort of complimentary note, requesting an interview.

"'Had Spleenwort,' said Graves, 'been first Lord of the Treasury, I could not have been more humble; or if I had been a porter in his hall, the First Lord would not have been so much the reverse.'

"Graves waited a whole week, under a total silence, when he ventured to remind the great man of his first note, by a

second, informing him that he only waited in town to know his pleasure.

"To this, after a few days' more delay, Spleenwort condescended to reply, but not in his own hand; and the letter," said Granville, "is such a curiosity, that Graves, having made me a present of it, I have looked it out for you."

Here he took it out of a cabinet, and I read as follows:—

"Sir—I am really so oppressed by the numerous applications from literary gentlemen of Oxford and Cambridge, and the Scotch Universities (indeed, from all parts of the world), that it is impossible to say when I can see you, or whether I can see you at all. I am even obliged to make use of my chief clerk's hand to acknowledge Mr. W——'s letter. I have great respect for *that* gentleman's *own* abilities; but I cannot conceal from you that I have so often been disappointed in the assistants whom he has recommended, that I am forced to be very chary in my selection of them. Most of them, however well intentioned, or versed in book knowledge, have no knowledge of the world, still less of business, and of the *principles* which necessarily govern the directors of the *critical* press they are totally ignorant.

"Mr. W——'s eulogy of you is strong, and I have no doubt you deserve all he has said of your TEMPER, LEARNING, CANDOUR, FAIRNESS, and IMPARTIALITY; but, to be plain with you, temper, impartiality, learning, and all that, though good in themselves, are not only common among young men, but are not exactly what we most look to, in a widely-circulated periodical like ours. I, therefore, by no means wish you to remain in town, to wait the time when I can see you; but if you are in the way, and will take the chance of my being at leisure some day next week, I will be glad (*should I be so*) to enter into your qualifications, terms, &c. &c. Meantime, I remain, Sir,

"Yours, &c. &c.

"SOLOMON SPLEENWORT."

I was petrified with the insolence of this letter, but particularly with the passage which did not blush to say, that the qualities of temper and impartiality were not exactly those that suited a critic.

"You see he was at least honest," said Granville.

"Honest in avowing dishonesty," replied I; "but can it be, that a critic must, or can, discard these sacred qualities?"

"You are most terribly green," returned my friend, "if you suppose that many *can* not, or even that they can prosper if they *do* not."

"Extraordinary!" cried I.

"Not at all," said Granville. "For as long as slander, or the pulling down of a party, or a great reputation, even at the expense, now and then, of a good fat lie—as long as this will insure more readers than the milk-and-water virtue of being just, so long will this system prevail, and so long will this most puissant Spleenwort take the sale of his strictures as a proof that he is the sovereign power of criticism of the day, and then——"

"What then?"

"He will, like

Jove in his chair,  
Of the press Lord Mayor,  
With his nods,  
Men and gods  
Keep in awe."

"You have described," said I, "a wonderful animal, of which I had no idea; and, from your account, he must have many requisites to complete so redoubtable a character. Great learning, of course?"

"The appearance of it will do," answered Granville, "provided it be disguised under a certain set of phrases, which have been justly called the cant of criticism, and are grown so mechanical that the lowest dabblers brandish them with dexterity; provided also the proper self-sufficiency, and contempt for those they attack, are always preserved. If once modesty and candor are allowed to mingle in such a critic as Spleenwort or Paragraph, there is an end of him."

"Learning, then," said I, "according to you, will do little."

"Not without other qualifications, denoting, indeed, very high gifts of mind."

"Will you name those gifts?" said I.

"Some of them," returned he, "are even heroic. For, in

the first place, a true critic of the character we are discussing ( for I speak only of the dross, not the gold of the class)—he who writes for the shop, with a view to sell his wares—must be able to bluster, and bully, and call names ; and yet be so thick-skinned himself, as to rise superior to a sense of shame, or even of insult, if he meet the same treatment in return. This, you will allow, is great mental courage.”

“ Great indeed,” said I.

“ Next, he must be able to abuse the person, birth, and private life of his victim, without caring whether what he says be true or false ; and if its falsehood be demonstrated, he must hold such a liberty as defending a man’s self in sovereign contempt ; or if he does not choose to be silent, he must write another paper, and abuse the presumptuous block-head ten times more than at first. This you will also allow is heroic.”

“ You paint,” said I, “ a man without a heart.”

“ You have hit it exactly,” returned Granville ; “ a *trading* critic is, and must be without a heart. But we have forgot poor Graves all this while.

“ True,” said I, “ and I am anxious to know how he succeeded finally with Mr. Spleenwort.”

“ Why, he had no success at all ; for, under all his meekness and simplicity, his pride would not permit him to dance attendance a single moment longer on Sir Oracle. But the alternative was unfortunate for this neglected son of literature ; for it produced so much distress to his mind, from the affronts he was forced to sustain, and to his body, from its depriving him even of sustenance, that he applied to me to obtain a clerkship in a public office. Yet so modest is his character, and so few his wants, that when not actually without a dinner, he is not unhappy, as long as he can loiter at what he calls his *home*, in his dressing-gown, unbuttoned and ungartered, with his book and his inkstand.”

This colloquy over, we proceeded to Wine Office Court, which we entered through a low and dirty passage, and beheld a gloom, and felt a closeness which formed a lamentable contrast to the light and cheerful airiness of the quarter we had left.

The court was none of the cleanest, and the house we entered, where Mr. Graves was a lodger up two pair of stairs,

was certainly not wanting in the *obsoleti sordibus tecti*. The door, a pannel of which was split, was opened by the landlady, whose appearance, however, did not prove that either air or water was absolutely necessary to make a person rubicund and fat.

Upon our asking whether Mr. Graves was at home "There," said she (pointing up a crazy staircase), "you will find him as high as you can go."

I blessed myself, when I recollected what I had once thought of as a pleasant profession, and how forcibly Manners put it to flight by a picture which here seemed about to be realized.

On ascending to the second story, we knocked at a door, which had certainly once been painted. The answer, "Come in," brought us to the sanctum of our man of letters.

He was, as Granville had described him, in his state of happiness—that is, in a loose dressing-gown, seemingly unacquainted with any laundress, leaning back in an arm-chair, so rickety, that it made us tremble for his safety. His legs were stretched aloft over a table, on which were several books, and also a plate, with the *beaux restes* of some bread and cheese, and an empty egg-shell, and as empty a porter pot.

Poor Graves started up dismayed, and full of blushes, at being thus surprised.

"I never thought, or expected, or hoped," said he to Granville, stammering, "that you would take the trouble of coming so far to return my visit, and I only left my address in case you should have occasion to write to me."

Then looking at me inquiringly, I was introduced to him as Lord Castleton's secretary, which brought an evident blush into his cheek, particularly when Granville added, I was his good friend, and he had communicated his views to me.

This, I believe made the good gentleman (happily for himself, of a sanguine temper) think the thing was done; for he became on the alert, begged us to sit down, and would have offered us chairs if he had had them.

There was indeed a window-seat; but as that also formed a locker for coals, which lay in scattered fragments on the cover, it could not be used. After a little conversation, which, therefore, took place standing, Granville told him that he won-



dered, with his attainments, that a poor clerkship would content him.

"You will be a mere piece of mechanism," said Granville, "a slave."

"I am both already," replied Graves, with a sigh; and my servitude, being of the mind as well as the fingers, is far worse than the same quill-driving would be with the will free. Take the last specimen of what I am."

At this opening his table-drawer, he pulled out a letter from the editor of one of the weekly papers who employed him, and which ran thus:—

"Mr. Graves,—I am sorry to say that you have again transgressed the line to which I have confined you. You have praised instead of condemned a work, so highly ministerial, and, what is worse, so able, that, if this goes on, my paper will be ruined. If you choose to set up for yourself, well and good; but in that case, I have no farther occasion for your services.

"I am your humble servant,  
SIMON SOURKROUT."

"Affronting enough," said Granville. "But had he then confined you to a particular line, and did you go from your agreement?"

"Quite the contrary," said Graves; "for I would not be bound, and the consequence was, that as I was paid by the piece for the works he should send, knowing my turn, he seldom sent me any; and you may therefore judge of the insolence of such a note."

"God keep me from such petty tyrants!" cried Granville; "and you, my friend, from such thralldom. We must try what can be done for you."

At this we took our leave, and I left him with a melancholy feeling that such things could be, from which I did not recover during all the way back to Granville's lodgings.

When there, I broke out into a long jeremiad, that such miseries (which till now I had never witnessed) could be allowed to belong to the republic of letters.

"You have miscalled it republic," said Granville; "at least if a republic mean an assemblage of freemen;—for never was such a set of tyrants as some of these self-installed usurpers;

who, if indeed a republic, claim to be the perpetual dictators of it."

"You describe, however," said I, "persons of very superior powers, and who, I suppose, are unrivalled for taste, and irresistible in their judgments; acquainted with all ancient and modern lore; versed in all sciences, and all arts."

"The arts of humbug and the science of abuse, if you will," replied Granville, "but no other. Recollect, however, I speak but of some editors, and not at all of those distinguished persons, both in station and knowledge, who lend criticism their able assistance; themselves (many of them) approved authors in prose and verse, poets, historians, and divines."

"You allow, then," said I, "that there are, as there ought to be, judges in literature, as there are in law?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Granville; "it is good for authors themselves, as well as for literature, that their faults should be pointed out. But as the judge in law pronounces sentence with dignity, and can never be personal without lowering his character, so the judge of authors can never call names without forfeiting his judicial function. He then becomes a mere thrower of dirt, and liable, as well as deserving, to be pelted in return."

"Nothing more just," said I. "But you talk of it, as if throwing dirt were part of a system."

"Judge for yourself," said he; "for having, as you know, myself been an amateur reviewer, I have sometimes been let behind the scenes, and once made a curious discovery of crypt secrets."

"Where, and when?" asked I.

"The time, not long ago; the place, the back parlour of that very Sourkrout who used poor Graves so ill. Though then a great ally, he has since quarrelled with me for not getting his son a place, which he thought I could do, and as a natural consequence, abuses me now thick and three-fold. I ought not, however, to complain, for his abuse was far less injurious to me than his praise."

"I never injured you," said he to me one day.

"Yes, you did," replied I, "for you spoke well of me."

"This increased our breach."

"Which originally began because you could not get his son a place?"

"Exactly so ; but the best is, he was most displeased because I treated his criticism with contempt ; for I shewed no resentment. 'I thought you would not speak to me,' said he, 'after that blow of mine, last week.'

" 'I was not aware of it,' returned I.

" 'The devil you were'nt,' replied he. 'Yet it was a pretty sharp one.'

" 'A blow must hurt, or do some damage, to cause resentment,' said I, 'so you are safe.' Mr. Sourkrout at this walked off, and has never spoken to me since."

"But your discovery?" said I.

"It was this. In the days of our friendship, boasting of the perfection to which he had brought the art of periodical criticism, so as to insure the rapidity so necessary for the shop, he one day shewed me a common-place book, drawn up by himself to facilitate it. In this was an article entitled *Epithets*, composed of two columns, *favourable* and *unfavourable*.

The first had very little belonging to it ; but the other was such a volume of Billingsgate, as almost put me to flight. There were ranged in order, under the head of *Epithets*, 'fool, dolt, bæotian, worm, spider, carrion,—ravings, brayings, slaver—mendacious, mare's nest, pickthank, toad-eater, lickspittle.'

"This you would think enough ; but these were single epithets. There were, therefore, compounds, or a kind of half-sentences, as 'insane and silly being ; bloated mass of self-conceit ; absurdity and insolence ; pitiful piece of puling ; consummate arrogance ; debility of understanding, and feebleness of genius ; abominable egotism and dogmatism.'\*

"This was for any persons who presumed to laugh at Mr. Sourkrout, of whom, to his astonishment, there were not a few.

"Then came whole sentences, ready cut and dried. 'No knowledge of facts ; style below mediocrity ; dull details ; not

\* You may doubt, reader, but in this polite age, all these epithets are to be found in one or other of the daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly literary press. Yet these are from the pens of scholars and the liberally educated. No doubt, as the writers are men who think they have the learning of Scaliger, they would prove it by imitating his temper and elegance. "*Stercus diaboli*," and "*lutum stercoris maceratum*," were some of his phrases towards those he attacked.

a spark of enlightened thought ; totally ignorant of the spirit of the age ; behind it by at least a hundred years.'

" This was for historical writers.

" Then followed 'bigot, zealot, reverend blockhead, inquisitor, burnings in Smithfield, intolerance, ignorance, those old women the Fathers ; dreams, hypocrisy, mammon of bishops ;' in short *odium theologicum* in all its details.

" This was for divines.

" Then again, 'Incapable of drawing a character ; has seen no life, and not able to describe it if he had ; fails in his heroines ; has no knowledge of the heart, like Richardson ; of manners, like Fielding ; of pathos, like Sterne ; or of the world at large, like Le Sage.'

" This for the novelists.

" There were also some general maxims in the form of memorandums, very useful as a key, and also to prevent getting into scrapes, For example :

" Mem. 1st.—'If the author not patronized by our shop, or not of our party in politics or religion, should the work be favored by the town, and too good to pull to pieces, find what fault you can with small things, confine yourself to generals, and leave out all the chief scenes and characters.'

" Mem. 2nd.—'If you criticise a particular word, always look into Johnson first, for fear you should be wrong ; but if, for want of this, you should be proved guilty of ignorance yourself, never retract ; and if any of your assertions you are convicted of a lie, repeat it, and you are safe. Besides, nobody knows who you are, so you fight comfortably behind a wall.'

" Mem. 3rd.—'If you write against a critic of another concern, remember he has no resources, no independence of his own, but is a bookseller's hack ; a venal scribe ; a tool, *et cætera*. If against a lawyer, be sure to quote Cicero, '*leguleius, præco actionum, cantor formularum, anceps syllabærum* ;' and give a proper sprinkling of pettifogger, special pleader, Old Bailey counsel, sharp practice, and the like.'

" If all this be correct," observed I, "it is systematic with a vengeance."

" Yes," replied Granville ; "and so far do they carry it that once being in Sourkrout's parlor, one of his writers came in, in a hurry, with his pen behind his ear, evidently big with

composition. Taking me perhaps for a brother journeyman, and going doggedly on with his work, he asked abruptly whether Mr. Fairchild, whose book was to be cut up, was thick or thin?

"‘O, very thin,’ replied Sourkrout, laughing.

"‘That’s enough,’ said the scribe, and immediately disappeared. I was completely lost at this; till, upon questioning him, Sourkrout informed me that thick or thin alluded to the skin of the author, which it was necessary to know, because the *personal* notice of him was to be manufactured accordingly. ‘For there are some of these fellows,’ said Sourkrout, ‘who are as tough as alligators; others as soft as wool-packs. You may fire shot at the one, and not penetrate; or beat the other with a club, and he will shrink, but always puffs out again as much as before. You may as well beat a carpet.’

"I think," concluded Granville, "I have now let you sufficiently in to the nature of some, at least, of these guiders of the public taste, who have the curse of Ishmael upon them; for their hand is against every man, and every man’s hand against them. Like chimney-sweepers, too, the more dirt they rake together, the more happy they are."

"A charming lesson," said I, "by which, if ever I turn author, I hope to profit. But are all of this description?"

"God forbid," replied he; "for I could name, and have introduced you to several whose candor and good manners are equal to their abilities."

"But is there no chastising such nuisances?" asked I.

"Yes; for an illiberal critic is always as thin-skinned as Mr. Fairchild himself. Flog him, therefore, with his own rod—that is, review his review—and he will whine like a hyæna, or squeak like a pig; particularly if he be an author himself, and you review him in your turn. No one is then so sore; not Sir Fretful himself; and he will go whining about the town, wondering what can have occasioned him so many enemies. This, however, is rare, because he generally conceals his identity under the royal term *wæ*, while the honest author is forced, for the most part, to present himself *in puris naturalibus*."\*

\* See the subject of anonymous criticism ably and pungently treated by Sir E. L. Bulwer, in his *England and the English*, Book IV.

All this astonished me. I owned my notion both of the character and consequence of a critic was incorrect, and was no longer surprised at the sort of subdued, but ill-concealed hatred which we see entertained towards some of these self-elected censors in society, over which, whenever they appear, they seem to throw a wet blanket.

"You, therefore," said Granville, "ought to feel yourself the more fortunate in finding, from those to whom I have introduced you, that there can be critics who are not slanderous, and who may be judges of literature without ceasing to be gentlemen."

"Those you allude to," said I, "are undoubtedly of that sort: Mr.——, for example, seems to justify the account of rational and just criticism given by Pope:

'The *generous* critic fann'd the poet's fire,  
And taught the world with reason to admire;  
Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid proved,  
To *dress* her charms, and make her more beloved.'

"Good," observed Granville. "But even Pope says that many of these critics were soon corrupted; and you should have gone on with your quotation:

'But following wits from that intention stray'd,  
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the *maid*;  
Against the poets their own arms they turn'd—  
Sure to hate most of the men from whom they learn'd.'

"But why hate?" asked I. "That is the question I should like to have solved."

"It is solvable," said Granville, "by the one single word: CONTEMPORARY. People in general do not hate the dead; nor even the living, when removed from the sphere of rivalry or adverse interest. Criticism, *then*, is prompted by a real love and taste for literature, and a real desire to promote its

"There are only two classes of men," says this observing essayist, "to whom the anonymous is really desirable. The perfidious gentelman, who fears to be cut by the friend he injures (to which it might have added, who fears for his own works), and the lying blackguard, who dreads to be horsewhipt by the man he maligns."

Pity that Sir Edward is able to support the first part of this observation by the example of a highly-gifted nobleman, one of whose best compositions, he says, was discovered in a review to be a most truculent attack upon his intimate companion.

interests. At any rate, the critics have no wish to exhibit any one *but* the author. A modern reviewer, of the character we have been investigating, whatever his taste for literature, is chiefly swayed by his personal feeling in regard to the writer; the interest he chiefly espouses is that of the shop; and the person he most wishes to exhibit is—himself.”\*

These observations of Granville, the result of much experience, as well as natural sagacity, to say nothing of an enviable *sang-froid*, which enabled him to judge without passion the most passionate set of people in the world, did me a great deal of good; or rather would have done it, had I continued inclined to turn either author or critic. In fact; however, I had not time for either; for all reading and writing was absorbed by official papers.†

\* In the same spirit with this remark, the acute and thinking Lord Dudley (himself a reviewer) says, in one of his letters to the Bishop of Llandaff, recently published, “If any branch of the public administration were as ‘*infamously jobbed*’ as the *Reviews*, it must soon fall a victim to the just indignation of the world.” See also an able pamphlet called, “*Reviewers Reviewed*,” by Mr. O’Reid. “Literature itself,” he states, “*interests* but few, though it *employs* so many more. Its honours are degraded; its pleasures are but little understood: it has assumed a *commercial* character, and is esteemed in this light. *It has fallen a prey to criticism.*”

† Though Granville having finished his strictures, I will not add to them in his own name, I cannot help here recollecting the sharp cutting-knife of a most trenchant, though a less polished person than Lady Hungerford’s admirer; and as there are malignant and ignorant critics, as well as fair and learned ones, while I honour the *latter*, I would address to the former what Swift says of their mother, in the “*Battle of the Books*.” It will wind up the subject excellently well:—

“Meanwhile Momus, fearing the worst, and calling to mind an ancient prophecy, which bore no very good face to his children the moderns, bent his flight to the region of a malignant deity, called *Criticism*. She dwelt on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla: there Momus found her extended in her den, upon the spoils of numberless volumes, half devoured. At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age; at her left, Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion, her sister, light of foot, hood-winked and headstrong, yet giddy and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dulness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry, and Ill-manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat; her head, and ears, and voice, resembled those of an ass; her teeth fallen out before; her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; *her diet was the overflowing of her own gall*; and what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of her spleen increased faster than the sucking of her children could diminish it.

“Goddess,” said Momus, ‘can you sit idly here, while our devout worshippers, the moderns, are this minute entering into a cruel battle, and perhaps now lying under the swords of their enemies? Who, then, here-

## CHAPTER IV.

OF THE KIND CONSIDERATION OF LORD CASTLETON, AND THE PLEASANT REMEDY HE APPLIED TO AN INCIPIENT ILLNESS.— I MEET SIR HARRY MELFORD, AND MAKE A NEW AND INTERESTING ACQUAINTANCE.—EFFECTS OF A DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE ON DIFFERENT DISPOSITIONS.—QUESTIONS AS TO WHAT MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO LOVE, WHAT TO PRIDE.

A babbled of green fields.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Henry V.*

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown.—*Hamlet.*

THE attention I gave to my official duties, partly from necessity, partly from taste, and greatly from the pleasure which I saw it gave Lord Castleton, had now become so intense, that pale cheek and a bilious eye proved to my patron that I was overdone. Of this he was himself so guiltless, that he was the first to remark, with a view to relieve it; and, with the consideration that belonged to him, he said to me one day at the close of pressing business which had absorbed

after, will ever sacrifice or build altars to our divinities? Haste, therefore, to the British Isle, and, if possible, prevent their destruction; while I make factions among the gods, and gain them over to our party.'

"Momus having thus delivered himself, staid not for an answer, but left the goddess to her own resentment. Up she rose in a rage, and, as it is form on such occasions, began a soliloquy: 'It is I,' said she, 'who give wisdom to infants and idiots; by me, children grow wiser than their parents; by me, beaux become politicians, and schoolboys judges of philosophy; by me, sophisters debate, and conclude upon the depths of knowledge; and coffee-house wits, instinct by me, can correct an author's style, and display his minutest errors, without understanding a syllable of his matter, or his language; by me, striplings spend their judgment, as they do their estate, before it comes into their hands. It is I who have deposed wit and knowledge from their empire over poetry, and advanced myself in their stead. And shall a few upstart ancients dare oppose me? But come my aged parents, and you, my children dear, and thou, my beauteous sister; let us ascend my chariot, and haste to assist our devout moderns, who are now sacrificing to us a hetacomb, as I perceive by the grateful smell which from thence reaches my nostrils.'

"The goddess and her train, having mounted the chariot, which was drawn by tame geese, flew over infinite regions, shedding her influence in due places, till at length she arrived at her beloved island of Britain."

SWIFT'S *Battle of the Books*. Works 2, 301.



many hours, "Industry in an official can never be but valuable, and joined with talent must lead to fortune. But too much application may defeat itself. Lord Somers indeed, it is said, though a man of polite literature, at last came to like a statute at large as well as he ever did Homer or Virgil; and when another minister fainted away, it was proposed to burn an Act of Parliament under his nose, as the most certain remedy to recover him. But you are not yet so broke in to the trammels of business to feel like them. Perhaps you have come too early and suddenly into laborious office, to which, as to every thing, one ought to be trained; and, as a scholar, you must regret the opportunities you lose for liberal studies, which office seldom gives you time to pursue. Whatever small stock of them I myself possess, I laid in long before I became so actively employed; and though, sometimes, *vacare literis* is perhaps the best maxim a man of business, particularly of political business, can adopt, it is more wished for than enjoyed. We are so tied to the

'Fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ,'

and the

'Superba civium potentiorum limina,'

that we sigh for a little wholesome leisure to put our thoughts in order, and recover our classics. This we cannot do in

'The smoke and stir of this dim spot  
Which men call London.'

I shall, therefore, instead of sending you to an apothecary, which I must if you stay here, send you to green fields, about which, you know even Falstaff babbled when he was ill and dying. Him, indeed, they did not recover, but you are not so far gone; so my orders to you for to-morrow, instead of the papers I gave you, are to set out for Windsor Forest."

Struck with this kindness, he saw how it overjoyed me; and went on to say, "Truth is, I have a letter from the excellent Manners, intimating that though he recommended you to me as a secretary, he did not design I should steal his pupil from him, or make you forget that there were other books besides those of the Privy Council, and other gardens

besides Kensington ; in short, Windsor Forest and the Grange. I would therefore advise you to go there now for a day or two ; and, for sometime to come, to make a regular citizen's holiday of it, and go down to him every Saturday and Sunday ; cultivate the muse, listen to his didactics (you may do a worse thing), or wander with him to the Warren House, and come back fresh to your task, which will then not operate as an opiate in regard to the *literæ humaniores*."

Nothing could fall in better with my own wishes than this considerate plan, which only added still more to my veneration for the accomplished nobleman who proposed it. It may be supposed I profited by it, and it had the effect of uniting me more than ever with one of the most rational guides and companions that a youth ever had. For by his knowledge of men and his knowledge of philosophy, Manners was a compound of Horace and Plato, to say nothing of his pastoral feelings, in those most pastoral of spots, Binfield, and Asher's Wood. The remembrance is still green with me, as the woods themselves when clothed in all their honours, and this will account for the rapture I indulged, in a former chapter, when I hailed my first approach to Windsor Forest, as the seat of my happiest acquirements.\*

One effect of these country retirements was not only to relieve the waste of town occupations, but to give a greater zest to town society.

After all the fine things which retirement deserves to have said of it, particularly when sought in order to get acquainted with one's self, its advantages are best brought to perfection by a collision with other minds, which see things differently ; so that by viewing them in other lights and by other experiences, the prejudice and one-sidedness of solitude may be corrected, and more chance obtained of arriving at truth.

Hence Manners, often on my quitting him to return to town, used to say,

"Go ; continue to observe, to note, and to remember ; lay in a fresh stock of materials, and come back with them, that we may examine their value, and turn them to shape."

The thought of this made the opinions and manners I met with in London of more consequence than perhaps they other-

\* See Vol. II.

wise would have been. Here my intimacy with Granville was very valuable, as a mean of introducing me to a greater variety of acquaintances than I could have otherwise achieved; men of different complexions, the thinking as well as the careless, the theoretical, the practical, the strict, the loose; and the collision, as I have called it, of all these, by always producing some addition to our stock of ideas, seldom failed to end in good.

For this purpose, though not, as I have stated, passing rich, Granville occasionally indulged himself in a little dinner society, where, though the treat was not extravagant, it was elegant, and though the company was not numerous, it was select.

Having engaged me one day to one of these parties, he surprised me by saying,

"Among others, you will meet your old acquaintance, Sir Harry Melford."

I almost started at that name, and felt a little alarmed, from old, and not over pleasant, associations. This I told Granville, but he answered,

"Poor fellow! you need not fear. You will meet a most altered creature. His gaiety, his good-breeding, and that air of decorous self-possession which generally gained him favour, are gone; all changed into either a reckless tone of libertinism, or a sullenness, evidently from uneasiness of mind, which he in vain endeavours to conceal."

I felt seriously sorry for this, and asked if there was any reason for it.

"I can guess it," said Granville, "and have long lamented it; for I have thought and still think him made for better things; and as, if I am right as to the cause of it, it was a fellow-feeling with you of despair as to a certain lady, I can only felicitate you upon not being involved in the same consequences."

This as may be supposed, engaged all my interest, especially when he went on to tell me, that, soon after the final extinction of his hopes of Bertha, to recover himself, Melford went abroad, most mistakenly sought his cure in a career of unbridled dissipation not to say libertine pleasures, and returned after a year's absence, with a woman, beautiful, clever, and accomplished indeed, but dissolute and designing, and not

even affording him the poor excuse, that she had sacrificed herself to him alone. In truth, though certainly very fascinating, she was a *femme aventuriere*.

"You have seen her then?" said I.

"Yes; and with all her personal attractions, so evidently is she the cause of ruin to the originally fine mind of our friend, that I could not help hating her as much as I pitied him. That she had made him a father, by no means diminished the feeling of either one or the other. In a word, it was evident that she was making it instrumental to a design, which everybody could perceive but himself, to prepossess him into marriage; and in the prospect of success in this, she had already become neglectful both of his comfort and the personal elegance to which she owed so much of her power.

"In truth," continued Granville, "soon after I first saw her, she seemed to have abandoned that minute attention to her dress and appearance which always goes for something with even an unworthy female, and actually shewed symptoms of a married slattern, who had relieved herself from the necessity of neatness. He saw it too, yet could not break his bonds. I wanted no other proof of his proximity to misery."

"This is a sad picture," said I, "Was it in his own house that you saw this? Had he gone such full length towards loss of character, as to take her home to him?"

"Why no; what I allude to was at an inn at Wetherby, where he had put up for the night. In his way, you know, he passed the gates of Foljambe, and his change of life since he had been received there under very different colours, made me mark the incident with more interest; for I was sent by my good uncle, who knew not this *liaison dangereuse*, to invite him to the park."

"And did he comply?"

"No; and it was his mode of receiving the invitation, and evident distress upon it, that told me the real state of his mind, however he may have disguised, or attempted to disguise it since."

"This opens a useful lesson," said I; "I should like to know the particulars."

"It was by chance," replied Granville, "from a call by your friend Sandford, that Mr. Hastings knew Sir Harry was

on the road, and as he had never been at Foljambe, but studiously avoided it, since his separation from Bertha, my uncle, out of his kindly nature, tried to tempt him to come and stay the night with him in preference to an inn, and with this view, as giving more weight to it, begged me to go over with the invitation.

"I did so, and shall not soon forget the scene. Though the evening had not closed in, both Sir Harry and his mistress were in slippers and *robes de chambre*. The lady, all dishevelled, was trying, though angrily, to quiet her brat (who was squalling unmercifully), and scolding poor Sir Harry for accusing her of having ill-managed the child. He himself looked sulky, and not the less for a dirty French nurse who took her mistress's part. The room still smelt of the dinner, divers garments were strewed upon the chairs, and it was thus I discovered the once gay Melford, proverbial for his elegance of dress and manner, and happy, cheerful aspect, reduced to be hen-pecked, not even by a wife.

"He started when he saw me, and his lady, snatching up her child, ran slipshod out of the room, followed by her *soubrette*. Poor Melford looked heartily ashamed, and could scarcely give me the common compliments of reception. But when I told him the message I was charged with, which was in truth couched in the most kind and friendly terms, for I was bidden to lament, in my uncle's name, that they should be separated, and intreat him to return to the old footing, he became unusually and violently affected. He strode across the room, struck his forehead more than once, and casting his eyes upon parts of his child's dress and a coral which were left behind, he heaved a deep sigh, and squeezing me by the hand, said,

"My dear friend, I am not worthy of it. This sad affair with Hortense! I dare not present myself at the park, the abode of all that is pure and virtuous—there is no disguising it, I DARE not come. Tell them not how you found me; yet that I am greatly obliged, and sorry that I cannot accept —"

"Here he stopt, and in effect, pitying him from my soul, I could not attempt to persuade him. We soon therefore parted, and I left him to such happiness as Hortense could give him."

"And yet," observed I, you say Hortense was beautiful and accomplished."

"She was attractingly, nay voluptuously so, and her eye fascinating as a basilisk's when she pleased. Off his guard, therefore, and perhaps seeking refuge in sophistry, to escape from his disappointment with Bertha, he persuaded himself, that his connection with a well-bred, handsome courtesan, ranked with, and gave as much pleasure as a more legitimate attachment. I have heard him hold something like it, when, in a fit of resentment against the whole sex, he has said, as none of them have any heart, without which their virtue is of little consequence, it is quite unnecessary either to seek or expect more happiness than a beautiful exterior and accomplished manners can supply. The scene, however, I have described told a different story as to his feelings."

"Yet you say he is not recovered, but has fallen into downright libertinism. How is that possible for one who ever loved or understood Bertha?"

"I fear," replied Granville, "it is because—while tied to this woman (by whom he has another child), and who now rules him despotically—he thinks he has nothing left for it but to follow up his doctrine of 'I take her body, you her mind; which has the better bargain?'"

"The truth I fear is, that, though no one can dispute that he loved Bertha, and, had he gained her, would have made a happy husband, his love was not unmixed with the pride which success with one so beautiful, well-born, and rich would have made him feel. Hence the madness caused by his disappointment was not for disappointment in love *alone*, but very strongly mixed with mortified vanity. Perhaps, also, his love was more sensual than pure, and in that case, his love of pleasure, as well as his hurt pride, drove him originally to this mode of revenge—for revenge he thought it. Had his affection for her been as pure as yours, he never would have stooped to such unworthy means of shewing his resentment.

"We shall, however, perhaps know more of him to-day, if the bottle, to which I am sorry to find he has too often recourse, in order to forget himself, will permit it."

Much impressed by this story, I thanked Granville for his

good opinion, and became almost impatient for his dinner party.

We were all assembled some time before Sir Harry made his appearance, and when he did so, I was shocked. Not only he had *slouched* in, as he said himself, in the *deshabille* in which he had passed the whole morning, without the least attention even to cleanliness, but his features, formerly so composed with tranquil good-breeding, seemed wild and haggard, his brow knit, and his cheek flushed, as if he had been engaged in altercation. He made, however, no apology for being so late; saying bluntly enough, that as he had done dressing, even for the ladies, and knew he was to meet nobody but a set of bachelors, he thought they would rather admit him as a sloven, than be kept waiting."

"If you have consulted your own comfort in this," observed Granville (ambiguously, as I thought), we have nothing to say."

And we took our places at the table.

As he came so late, there had not been time for introductions, and it was only upon Granville's calling upon me casually by name that Sir Harry seemed to notice me with his glass—when I could plainly perceive, by the effect it had upon him, that he had made me out as the person of possibly what he thought an equivocal description, between gentleman and humble friend, whom he had formerly met, in doubtful circumstances, at York.

The remembrance certainly affected him, for he looked intensely at me, sighed, and was silent, and seemed to wish to drown thought by a rapid challenge of bumpers with every one at the table.

Not content with this, at the dessert he made a desperate attack on a vase of brandy cherries, confirming uncomfortably the account Granville had heard of his disposition to raise artificial spirits from these libations.

By those means, though at first he had been almost sullenly silent, he grew in the end loquacious upon almost all the subjects that were started, particularly on one, which not unnaturally, in a company of young men, almost all unmarried, turned upon the character, power and influence of women.

This, always interesting to me, was rendered peculiarly so by the manner in which he treated it, as I could never forget

that he had been the sincere lover of Bertha, and therefore most likely to do justice to the question. How was I surprised and disappointed, notwithstanding Granville's forewarning, to hear what I did! How did I lament what seemed to me the overthrow of a mind, which, I agreed with Granville in thinking, was made for better things.

The conversation turning, I know not by what introduction, upon the licentiousness of the times of Charles II. and Louis XIV., and the manners and engagements of women in those days, Sir Harry professed himself their unqualified admirer, as the only example of real freedom of life, unrestrained by musty rules, made only, he said, to tyrannize over the young and ardent of both sexes, under sophistical pretences.

He, of course, laughed at marriage, and declared it a crafty invention of priests and lawyers, and adopted by statesmen to keep people in trammels, and save trouble. It followed that he was an advocate for the doctrines which, growing out of the licentiousness of French romances, were beginning to be seriously entertained by the then wide-spreading philosophy which was hastening the crisis of the French revolution. By these it was held, and afterwards for a time made law, that marriage meant an agreement of men and women to live together so long as they were mutually pleased, and no longer.

What was called the virtue of a woman, he counted for nothing, being, as he said, the result of force. He supported this theory by examples drawn from the *authorized liaisons*, as he called them at Paris, where he seemed to have studied them, as well as from a number of those loose and mischievous memoirs of actresses, and fashionable demireps, which from time to time had appeared, and had been equally the object of his research. Some of these were *Ninon de l'Enclos*, Constantia Philips, Mrs. Baddeley, Mrs. Robinson, *et id genus omne*—in all of which he appeared to be well versed.

To do justice to Granville's party, though almost all very young men, we looked at one another with a kind of disgust at these sentiments, which Granville endeavored to get rid of, rather than answer, by saying he was quite sure his friend Sir Harry was not serious in them, and only broached them as amusing paradoxes.



Sir Harry, however, declined availing himself of the retreat thus offered, declaring he was perfectly in earnest ; and moreover added (for by this time the claret began to work), that he did not believe there was one in the company who, if he dared, would not avow himself of the same opinion.

"I should be sorry to think that," said Mr. Brownlow, a gentleman of about Granville's age, of uncommon intelligence of features as well as elegance of appearance, and who, it seems, after having had the reputation of being a great champion, as well as admirer of the sex, was lately married. "I believe I know something of women, and I beg not to be included in this sweeping declaration."

"We shall be all against you, Melford," said Granville, "so you may as well give in, and confess that you have thrown up a straw to see how the wind lies."

"No such thing," replied Sir Harry ; "and least of all, since Brownlow professes to be against me—the most determined devotee and worshipper in the temple of Cupid ; whose taste in beauty is proverbial, and who is courted by the women for a good word, or bad sonnet, to put them into fashion."

Brownlow good-humoredly joined in the laugh which this occasioned, observing, however, somewhat seriously,

"If I am, indeed, all this, I trust it may be a proof that I am not a bad judge of my subject, and that I may be right in opposing every one of the strange positions you have laid down, particularly when you disparage marriage, and prefer a brittle mistress, even (as I would allow you to mean) as a mere source of pleasure, to a virtuous wife."

"This, to me," replied the baronet ; "me, who have heard you rave by the hour about Madame Rossi's grace and Miss Brown's charms ;\* so that you never missed an opera when one danced in *Don Juan* ; nor the *Duenna*, or *Beggar's Opera*, when the other sang in Clara or Polly. Nay, you are talked of, and cannot deny it, as one of the initiated, a hero of the Green-room."

Here Sir Harry got another little laugh against Mr. Brownlow, who, however, sustained himself with dignity, though he pleaded guilty to the whole charge of admiring the theatri-

\* Madame Rossi was the Taglioni of this time ; and Miss Brown, afterwards Mrs. Cargill, the original Clara of the *Duenna*, and most attractive Polly in the *Beggar's Opera*.

cal charms of both the ladies mentioned, and even of his pleasure sometimes in the Green-room.

"You see," said he; "I deny nothing, for, in truth, it is this very experience of the little real power of attraction in your goddesses that gives me a right to protest against your opinions. I may and do find pleasure in contemplating the talents, and, if you will, the beauty, of these and other celebrated ladies (the whole sex at large, if it so please you); but do not mistake me—with all my devotion, and whatever my admiration of them for the passing hour,—for her person, her wit, or her accomplishments, I could not live as a companion with any woman whom I could not esteem."

Sir Harry looked a little disconcerted, especially when we all seemed to approve the sentiment; but still more when Mr. Brownlow went on—

"Her wit, indeed, if it was very racy and pungent, as was said of Lady Dorchester's and Nell Gwyn's, I might admire; her accomplishments might even fill me with wonder; but would this either create a moral respect, or satisfy the heart? When passion was gratified, and languished, as it soon would, what would be left to renew, or continue, much more to heighten it? Any thing from mind? from reciprocity of sentiment? from mutual esteem? No. She has no mind; or if she has, it can only embitter her feelings, by making her lament the loss of her virtue."

"Is virtue, then, or rather chastity, for that is your meaning," said Sir Harry, "a *sine qua non* to good taste? In the arts, or *belles lettres*, for instance? May not an elegant-minded mistress be your companion there?"

"My point is," answered Brownlow, "that in an unchaste woman, or one who has parted with her honour, this elegance of mind is not to be found."

"What! may not she understand and admire a picture or a statue?"

"Yes; particularly if they partake, as they very likely may, of her own licentiousness; but in the *belles lettres* which you also mentioned, I should say not;—for genuine *belles lettres* having good taste for their province, and all good taste, that is, real elegance of mind, requiring delicacy and virtue for their foundation, nay, their very essence, a woman destitute

of these, as an unchaste woman must be, cannot feel their real beauties.<sup>m</sup>

"According to you, then, a kept mistress could not relish Shakespeare?"

"I know not," said Brownlow, "what parts of him she might relish; but there are parts which, if she is not lost to all feeling, must make her ashamed, despairing, and unhappy. What woman of loose conduct, if not abandoned, could contemplate the innocent Juliet or Desdemona, Imogen or Ophelia, and, far from pleasure, not turn with horror to herself? But if abandoned, what pretension can she have to the delicacy of mind which I have said is essential to the good taste necessary to make a woman a companion?"

We all applauded this sentiment, and the baronet looked embarrassed.

"As my support in this," continued Brownlow, "recollect the poor Jesse of Shenstone, once seemingly endow'd with a taste for elegance, but lost with her innocence:

'If thro' the garden's flowery walks I stray,  
And court the jasmins which could once allure,  
Hope not to find delight in us, they say,  
For we are spotless, Jesse, we are pure,'

Such self-condemnation, by destroying all cheerfulness, must at once destroy companionship, and render even beauty nugatory, perhaps repulsive; and thus, as far as even mere passion is concerned, your heroine has lost the power of creating it, and has dwindled either into a sorrowful mope, or a reckless, abandoned prostitute."

Instead of answering this forcible elucidation, Sir Harry filled his glass to the brim, and began beating the devil's tattoo under the table; and it was easy to see he was maintaining a contest with himself; but rallying a little, he observed,

"This will, at least, not apply to a mistress's wit. That surely must remain intrinsically wit, whatever becomes of esteem."

"I am too fond of wit, as a mark of intellectual vigour," returned Mr. Brownlow, "to deny its power. But in this instance, what power? To please by filling the understanding, and giving food for reflection? No; to amuse, perhaps

to dazzle and excite, but only for a moment. The effect over, it revives not. Like a cordial, it warms and kindles, but has no nourishment; for we love not, because we do not respect the person of the speaker, and our esteem for intellect is so mingled with disesteem for character, that we do not remember what is spoken with pleasure."

"According to this," said Sir Harry, "you would not admire a beautiful passage in a play, should the actor be a bad moral character."

"I should endeavour," returned Brownlow, "to think only of the author, and forget the actor."

"But how, if the author himself was a profligate? Would that derogate from the beauty of the language?"

"Not from its beauty in the abstract," returned Brownlow, "but from my pleasure in it, certainly, unless I could succeed in forgetting the writer."

"What think you of Sterne or Rousseau?" asked Sir Harry.

"As writers or men?" asked Brownlow.

"As both conjoined," replied Sir Harry.

"Much as I admire them as writers," said his opponent, "if I think of their characters while reading, I answer distinctly and fairly, my pleasure is much diminished."

"What! at the pathos which surrounds Uncle Toby and Le Fevre, or the wit that belongs to old Shandy!"

"Even so; unless, as it luckily often happens, that in this wit and pathos I am so beguiled, that I forget the bad husband and pretended lover of virtue."

"And Rousseau?"

"There I am very clear; for in all his most eloquent touches, I never do, and never can, forget the hypocritical sophist—the avowed thief—the false witness—the deserter of his offspring. No, Melford, do not be led astray by the meteor of false sentiment, into the deceit of thinking evil good, or good evil; or that a woman's virtue does not heighten her charms, even to a man of pleasure. But, as to the meretricious attractions of the persons you have mentioned, be assured, what I always thought, and now know, is true; that one kind look, one soft pressure of the hand, from the wife of your heart, who loves you, and knows you love her, is worth a whole harem of purchased favours."

This address seemed by no means thrown away upon him

to whom it was directed, for he not only shewed signs of being beat, but of inward distress, for which, when I thought of what had caused this change in his character, I heartily pitied him.

Nor was it lost upon any of us, least of all upon myself; for I conceived both liking and respect for Brownlow, who did honour to that undefinable character, a man of fashion; and I was glad, by Granville's particular introduction to him, to add so worthily to the list of my select acquaintance.

Having outstaid the company, Granville gave me the following account of Brownlow:—

"He is a man of fortune," said he, "good family, and of the best *monde*; or, as Shakspeare would say, 'of great admittance.' He has been as much what is called a man of pleasure, as a pure taste and fine mind would permit him to be, so as to have acquired much knowledge of the ways, perhaps of the corruptions of society, without being corrupted himself. His talents for pure and good criticism threw him at one time a good deal into the theatrical world, where his judgment was much respected, and his notice courted by the women as much as the men; and hence Melford's allusions. But, if not his virtue, his *tasté*, in regard to the sex, of which you saw a good specimen, kept him pure in those opinions which he so well enforced; and in this he was the more lucky, for, previous to his present happiness in marriage with a woman of great beauty and merit, he was a warm and ill-used lover."

"Ha!" cried I; was such a man ill-used? Disappointed perhaps?"

"Downright jilted."

"You amaze me!"

"I thought I should; and I am not sorry that you have seen him thus flourishing and happy, because I had him often in my mind when I told you that a man might love to distraction, and yet recover; nay, as in this gentleman's instance, rejoice in his failure in one place, for his far superior happiness in another."

"This must be an interesting history," said I.

"It is; but not on account of any particular adventures—any romance—but merely from the completeness of his recovery, and his achievement afterwards of the most perfect felici-

ty, from a state of seemingly the most torturing desolation."

This excited me more and more, and I told Granville he was too slow in his narration.

"You will be more impatient as we go on," said he, "for the love between him and his first mistress commenced when he was a youth and she a girl."

"Good. But pray go on."

"Her father, a country gentleman, was one of his guardians; he sometimes passed a vacation from college with them, and the woods and fields, the primroses and nightingales, produced their usual effect; in short, they fell violently in love with each other, though Elizabeth felt the indications of it first, and so ingenuously confessed it, that it operated most with him in producing the passion he felt on his part. As we were schoolfellows and fellow collegians, I speak with full information."

"Pray get on," said I.

"Well; eternal constancy, as usual, was vowed; the match approved by papa, when a few years should have matured it, both being so young; meantime correspondence, and a vast *et cætera—quæ nunc perscribere longum est*.

"As I was his confidant, I heard all his accounts of her beauty and merits, and sometimes saw them together; but, except in the common attractions of youth, freshness and good humour, and a seemingly entire devotion to him, I perceived nothing to justify the frenzy which afterwards ensued on his disappointment."

"There was frenzy, then?"

"Scarcely short of it, I assure you. He was but one-and-twenty when, though his own letters had begun to be not over warm, he complained that her's were growing cold, and this excited him from a tolerably tame, engaged lover, into one agitated with fears and uncertainties. He thought Elizabeth the most enchanting person upon earth; no one like her; he was perpetually invoking her name, and wrote most passionately; till her own warmth continuing to fall off, he could bear it no longer, and though scarcely of age, he resolved to bring the matter to a point, by insisting upon the immediate fulfilment of the engagement, or a breach of it for ever

"To his then dismay, and after happiness, the breach was preferred. A winter at Bath, while he was immersed in Oxford studies, and the offers of a headlong young peer, just

out of leading-strings, had undermined him; his betrothed was faithless, and he was undone."

"How could such a person," asked I, "have such consequence with him as to occasion the misery you say he suffered?"

"Ask," replied Granville, "those who understand the unintelligible subject of love, in all its million of forms and colours, to explain it, for I could as soon square the circle as tell you. All that I could really gather from it was, that real love is the most difficult thing in the world to discover; so many of its symptoms, and those the most marked and violent, being usurped by other passions."

"In this case, as I told you, my friend seemed frantic with disappointment. He exhibited sometimes a paroxysm of rage—sometimes a silent mournfulness, not the less pitiable, because I thought the occasion of it was unworthy. He was so sunk in bitterness as to loathe all his former occupations, whether of amusement or instruction, and even his food. He would estrange himself from company for weeks, and, like a Camillo, plunge into the depths of the forest of Dean, near which he dwelt, shunning every thing cheerful, and wholly absorbed by the disgust that consumed him."

"And yet I am sure all this passion—this agony of disappointment—was not the effect of love so much as mortification and hurt pride operating upon a sensibility, at that time of his life so morbid, that I feared for his mind. I am persuaded of this, because, while things were smooth, and he thought himself secure, his feelings were comparatively tame. He bore absence most heroically. His eyes did not sparkle, nor his countenance beam with joy, when the lady approached, and he always quitted her with calmness. Had prudence, or any other worldly cause, broke their engagement, I am mistaken if it would have cost him a sigh. On the contrary, I have seen him sigh when he has remarked how little of companionship she possessed for a mind like his. He admired, loved her at first, as a beautiful child, but no more. He reposed upon this; expected no more; and was negatively happy. How was I astonished, therefore, to witness this burst of fury—this passion of anger—and still more at the lasting effects it seemed to produce upon him. At the distance of twelve months he could not hear her name

mentioned, nor even that of the place where she dwelt, without trembling, and he shunned the pathway that led from his garden to the church-door, because several of the tombstones by which he had to pass recorded the name of Elizabeth."

"It would be difficult," said I, "to pronounce that this was not love, and yet, from your account of the object, it would be still more difficult to suppose it was."

"All that we can decide upon," returned Granville, "is, that the very profound and very new apothegm that Love is blind, is founded in truth. The wonderful part of the story is, that Brownlow's cure was as unaccountable as his infatuation. This compound passion of love, anger, and resentment, dropt out of his heart of itself, without being immediately influenced by any other. He enjoyed his liberty, and coursed the world in its pleasantest scenes; made a reputation for himself, which you see was deserved, and which went far to his success with the lady he married (Lady Elizabeth Belmore), as opposite to his former Elizabeth as light to darkness.

"And now go home; ponder all you have seen and heard; and rest assured that although, as in the case of poor Melford, a disappointment in love may lead to a destruction of mind (as, in fact, it does often to that of the body), yet such was not the intention of Nature when she indued us with such elasticity of disposition, and such good principles, as shine in Brownlow. Apply this to yourself, and so good night."

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## CHAPTER V.

I HAVE ANOTHER INTERVIEW WITH LADY HUNGERFORD, WHO IS MORE DISCOURAGING AND MYSTERIOUS, YET KINDER THAN EVER.

Thou art all ice—thy kindness freezes.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Richard III.*

I HAVE too long neglected to mention my charming instructress, Lady Hungerford. For though she was pleased



to say I no longer wanted schooling, from old kindness she admitted me as usual ; nay, as I thought, was more than ever gracious.

I did not plume myself upon this, for I had tact enough to see that Granville's friendship for me, or rather perhaps my friendship for *him*, which made him my constant theme, went full half-way towards the easy footing on which I was treated. Be that as it may, I was never denied, and sometimes without waiting in the ante-room was conducted at once to the boudoir.

On one of these occasions, Lady Hungerford was not there, though she could only just have quitted it, for her keys were in her cabinet, and several letters lay open upon the table. One of them, a very long one, was in a hand I had always too well recollected ; and, to my astonishment, delight, and terror, a miniature of the writer, exquisitely painted, and giving all the sparkle as well as sensibility of her countenance, lay by the side of it.

I was quite overpowered—my eyes gloated upon it—I fetched my breath quickly—and was lost in a trance, when my patroness entered.

She saw at once my whole situation ; coloured deeply herself, with surprise and agitation, and would have been angry, had she not seen, as she said, that I was more sinned against than sinning. She, however, in a hurried manner, swept the letters from the table, and turned the face of the miniature from my eyes ; though that did little good, for the back shewed one of those lovely dark tresses, which I had too often admired not to recognise.

After a minute's silence, during which she seemed to be recollecting herself, Lady Hungerford said,

"This is most untoward. I will own to you that I have kept this picture almost religiously from your sight, from the fear of the very effect which I see it has had upon you ; and most seriously do I grieve to see how little you are cured when *most* it behoves you to be so."

I gave a deep sigh at every thing being thus recalled, but could not help saying,

"Surely, lady, there is some mystery hanging about this agitating subject, which, as you are so kind as to interest yourself about it, you would only be more merciful to explain.

Why, may I humbly ask, does it *more* behove me now to be cured than at any other time, when at any, and every time, I feel that not to be so only urges me on to perdition?"

"I had hoped," replied she, recovering her composure, "never to have heard that sentiment again; and really, from your friend Mr. Granville's account, I thought that your study of the world, in which you were making such progress, had had the effect we both wished for you. This little incident has undeceived me; and I shall certainly ask my uncle to send you abroad with your friend, as soon as the event he expects happens. To remain here is madness, and pity indeed is it that so fair a fortune in expectancy should be spoiled by such want of firmness." Then, seeing that I was about to reply, she interrupted me, saying, "It is not that I blame your constancy, or that I do not in some measure admire it; but when so strongly forbidden by duty to her, as well as yourself——"

"Duty to her!"

"Yes; for why should you embarrass, and add to her uneasiness?"

"I, madam? I *embarrass*? I *add* to uneasiness?" What can this mean? Is not Miss Hastings free—free as air? Unless indeed she too has set her affection where it is not returned; but that—that's impossible!"

"I believe so," said Lady Hungerford. "But let me probe you, and deeply too, in a question which I will not ask if you are afraid of it; for I tell you it will try you."

"If it be anything," replied I, firmly, "which concerns Miss Hastings' happiness—if it reveal that her affections are both pledged and requited—believe me, though my life depend upon it, I would rejoice."

"Nobly resolved, and nobly uttered," replied Lady Hungerford; "and I am sure my dear Bertha would feel all its generosity, could she know it. But tell me if I am really to understand what it imports, that you could see her married with composure, and be yourself happy?"

"With composure, I will not say," returned I; "but as happy as I am now—nay more, to think that her own happiness was secured, I am very sure of myself when I answer, yes."

"I am very sure," replied the frank and winning lady,

"that you yourself deserve all the happiness you have missed, and if that will console you, that your own heart is not unworthy of Bertha's. Were the thing not absolutely impossible, and willed by fate so to be, I could even wish you success; nor, I am free to say, is there anything in your birth, still less with your mind, and the prospects you have before you, in your worldly situation, which would prevent my doing so. But fate, as I have said, has so willed it, and must be obeyed. The thing, were you an emperor, is quite out of question."

I felt all the kindness and condescension of this speech, and only longed to kiss the fair hand which touched my arm in the eagerness with which she supported it by action. I felt it, however, as a complete death-warrant, and so I told her, adding my entreaty that all the mystery which seemed, particularly of late, to hang about the subject might be cleared up.

"It would," I said, "go farther than anything else to settle my mind forever. As it is," I added, "the uncertainty, the mystery, are far more insupportable than the unequivocal assurance of her hand and heart being betrothed."

Lady Hungerford, smiling at the energy with which I said this, observed, that she thought Rousseau himself could not have expressed his feelings more warmly. Better, however, to forget, instead of nursing them, which it was too plain I was doing.

"Your ladyship need not fear for me," replied I, "provided only that the fact is, as I have gathered it from all quarters—that the execution is ordered, and that there are no hopes of a reprieve."

At this she looked hesitatingly, and at length observed,

"I do not mean to say, that what you have supposed, and seem so to wish, is the absolute fact; nor am I at liberty to say a word more; but if it were (whether this is, or is not, bravado), let me ask, what really would become of your affection?"

"Madam," answered I, "I would hug it to my heart, and carry it with me to the grave."

The amiable woman was moved with this in a manner as remarkable as unexpected. Her cheek flushed, tears glistened in her eyes, and this queen of fashion, this observed o

the drawing-room, and ornament of the presence, became an absolute daughter of nature in her simplest and most amiable form. How wrong are upstart railers to suppose that either men or women are *necessarily* hardened because their lot is cast among the great.\*

Finding that the agitation produced did not subside, she said, with a smile which almost contradicted her words,

"You must go, for 'tis in vain to counsel, and almost to blame you. These conversations do me no good, and must not be renewed. Go; and God bless you."

With that she gave me her hand, which with all her kindness she had never done before, and I left her in a tumult of curiosity as well as of anxiety; for, while I considered this conversation more than ever decisive of my fate, there was a mystery about it, which I would have given more than I was worth to unravel.

That day there was another great dinner at Lord Castleton's, very different from the last I described, as having been so honoured by the attendance of the illustrious Paragraph. In my then frame of mind, perhaps this was the best thing that could have happened, to divert it from the consuming thoughts which my interview with Lady Hungerford had generated. But my thoughts, not at all prepared to wander into the world, were centered more than ever in the comparatively little spot which contained all that, in my mind at least, that world could boast of, that was worth pursuing.

I would, therefore, far more readily have shut myself up with Granville, who called upon me an hour before dinner, to whom I related all that had passed with Lady Hungerford, and whom I in vain sounded, and at last entreated, as one in confidence of the family, to supply what Lady Hungerford thought it her duty to refuse me.

"I have long," said I, "thought there was some mystery

\* This reflection, just in itself, is supported by a trait in a very great person, so pleasing, that I cannot help transcribing it. When the Dauphin of France was attacked by the small-pox, in 1752, his wife passed days and nights by his bed-side. Poupe, a blunt physician, called in, and being a stranger to the court, did not know her, and thought she was a hired nurse. "Parbleu," said he, "voilà la meilleure garde que j'ai vue. Comment vous appelle-t-on, ma bonne?"—*Mems. de la Housset*

Catalogues are made of the crimes of royal persons; why not of their virtues?

hanging over this too fascinating being—fascinating, you know, to others as well as to me, but whose addresses she refused. At her age, and with her great part in the world, if she choose to play it, to remain shut up within so small, though seemingly so magic a circle as Foljambe, from which, as if spell-bound, she does not issue, never coming to London, or approaching the court, which she seems formed to adorn as well as a rural shrine; her father, though old, not being any obstacle to this from want of health or even inclination:—all this surely must appear as marvellous to you as to me, unless you have a key to it.”

“You forget,” said he (endeavouring, as I thought, to parry my question), the domestic calamity they suffered, not so long ago as for its effect to have subsided. With all his faults, Mr. Hastings loved his son, and she her brother, so much so, that although not in the same degree, we might almost compare her feelings to those of the lady Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, who also lost a brother,

‘For whose dear love,  
They say she hath abjured the sight  
And company of men.’”

“Were this only the first year of that sad catastrophe,” I replied, “the reason might suffice; but even Olivia, it should appear, did not remain a recluse three years, nor even in her retirement abjure the sight, at least, of the proper man. In short her grief was not confined to the loss of a brother. Here, therefore, there not only may be, but from Lady Hungerford’s plain admission, there is a proper man. For the love of heaven, therefore,” said I, “as well as for the effectual cure it will prove to myself, tell me if it is so. Once convinced that her affections are engaged, though to whom, in the recesses where she has so long been buried, it would puzzle a magician to discover, I shall far sooner recover my senses, than under the impression that her heart is still virgin.”

Granville smiled, but I never liked him so little as in his reply. For, far from endeavouring to calm the agitation in which he saw me, he coolly observed, that if Lady Hungerford had plainly admitted it, I wanted no further proof.

“You are unkind, Granville,” said I.

"We shall be too late for Lord Castleton's," replied he, and left me to dress.

It was plain to me that he knew more than he chose to reveal, and at the moment I hated him for it.

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## CHAPTER VI.

MORE OF SOCIETY; AND OF TWO NOBLE PERSONS I MEET  
WITH AT LORD CASTLETON'S.

Or else a feast,  
And takes away the stomach; such are the rich,  
That have abundance, and enjoy it not.  
SHAKSPEARE.—2 *Henry IV.*

You must consider that a prodigal's course  
Is like the sun's, but not like his, recoverable.  
*Timon of Athens.*

AFTER all, there is an elasticity of mind attendant upon a young gentleman of three-and-twenty, who has little upon his conscience, who has experienced no great misfortune, but who, on the contrary, views the world in all the prodigality of hope, for which kings and emperors might wisely exchange their diadems. Heaven be thanked, this is not confined to any particular condition of life, but is equally enjoyed by the prince and peasant; for it is the gift of the Author of nature to all his creatures who know how to use it. Happy are they with whom it lasts longer than the age I have mentioned.

From some of the guests I met at Lord Castleton's on the day I am now commemorating, if ever they had possessed it; it had long fled with their years, and, unfortunately, had not been replaced by any other blessings, such as I had met with in Manners.

The agitation I had undergone was at least not new: it had often risen and subsided, and I was not so absorbed by it, as not to make one or two of these characters my particular

study. They were living proofs that neither rank nor wealth, and certainly not abilities, can command "our being's end and aim,"—happiness.

This being a speculation I was always fond of, by degrees the absorption of my mind yielded before it; and, though the thought of company, when I wished to be a hermit, had at first revolted me, the company in which I found myself, at length diverted and engaged much of my attention. There was indeed no illustrious Paragon to amuse by his empty effrontery; but there was that happy mixture of the distinguished of the land for high rank and good-breeding with those celebrated for talent and good humour, in which my patron, "in his happier hour," used frequently to indulge his fine mind.

Two persons in particular, from what I had often heard of their history, though I had never seen them before, struck me as subjects for a philosopher of the world, which, as the pupil of Fothergill and Manners, notwithstanding my insignificance, I pretended (to myself, at least) to be. These were Lord Felix,—worthless in himself, but a minion of fortune; and the Marquess of Rochfort, valuable in himself,—but the victim of self-will.

Lord Felix seemed to have been born and to have lived one of those indices marked out by Providence, to shew how utterly inadequate are the gifts of fortune, unaccompanied by the true knowledge of their usefulness, to produce happiness in one's self, or esteem in others. He was profuse without being generous; luxurious without comfort; proud without self-respect. He had no capacity, and if ambitious, it was therefore in little things. His wealth might have given him influence in the state, or secured him the blessings of a thousand followers; but he preferred frittering it away upon gilt plate, gilt coaches, trappings of horses, and laced liveries. If his dinners were the theme of praise for the exquisiteness of their cookery, their unseasonable delicacies, and the raciness of his wines, his elation was at its highest; but he shewed little choice in the selection of his guests, and his carnal feasts were any thing but those of reason.

The consequence was, that Lord Felix was generally surrounded by parasites, who paid him with open flattery and secret contempt. His house was a magazine of costly an-

tiques, marbles, models, and expensive, but not the best paintings ; and his library made a scholar's mouth water ; but the poor gentleman, wholly without knowledge, though expensively educated, and twice experienced in the tour of Europe, knew nothing of these things, and he entertained a librarian and a foreign virtuoso for the express purpose of explaining what he could not explain himself to those who came to see him.

Nothing pleased Lord Felix more than to be asked the value of what his town house contained ; and the affected carelessness, but real complacency, with which he answered, "he believed about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds," shewed the whole length, and breadth, and depth of his mind.

With all this, he was no patron of the arts, no contributor to the success of public institutions, or the relief of private distress. In short, he imitated the waste, but not the generosity of the unhappy Timon.

But as Lord Felix scarcely ever met with a disappointment in life, could it be that he was not what his name imported, happy ?

Whatever he had been in his youth, when accumulating what I have described, he certainly was not so now. For, far advanced in age, excitement, and with it, occupation, was gone ; and having no real resources, no mental pleasures, he became a burthen to himself in the hour of loneliness, and, unequal to enlightened companions, was left to the purchased attentions of interested hangers-on.

From this his only relief was the banquet and dissipation, though even these were beyond his bodily strength. The moment of dinner, and the company it assembled, was, however, the great moment of the day, for it took him out of himself ; and as his high quality obtained him admittance everywhere, for the same reason, tottering as he was with age, he visited the midnight assembly or ball-room, when all his spirits were exhausted, and he was fitted only for bed.

What was worse, if he slept not when there, he had no consolation ; for, long past the age of man, any hour of the day or night (and he both knew and feared it) might bring him his summons ; and when pale Death, who, without Horace's authority for it, we know beats equally at the door of



the palace and the cottage,\* should knock at his, his laced porter could not tell him his lordship was "not at home." This affected him; for his kingdom was of *this* world, and a voice had certainly "fallen from heaven," telling him that his kingdom had departed.†

In this trial he had no consolation from religion; for of religion, amidst his splendour, he had never found it necessary to think. He knew nothing of himself but what other people told him; and, struck with his display, or seduced by interest, they told him many a falsehood. The very best of them flattered themselves in flattering him. His nod, backed by his riches, gave them importance; and this nod could only be obtained by adulation.

With all his profusion, as he had never been munificent; he had not even the comfort which the "good old Earle of Devonshire" recorded on his tomb:

"What I spent, that I had;  
What I gave, that I have."

In short, he was a sad example of the apothegm of Seneca:

"Ills mors gravior incubat,  
Qui notus nimis omnibus,  
Ignotus moritur sibi."‡

The other living proof I have mentioned—that high station and apparent prosperity by no means carry happiness along with them—was exhibited, to the great regret of those who knew him well, by the Marquess of Rochford. He was a nobleman of very superior character, and of high rank, though much less wealth, than Lord Felix.

That his wealth, indeed, was greatly inferior to what his rank and ambition required, had plunged him into difficulties which never left him during life. But this was the least cause of his chagrin; for he was of a very high and towering spirit, which neither rank nor wealth could satisfy, without

\* "Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede," &c.

† "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, the kingdom is departed from thee."—Daniel, iv. 31.

‡ "Death hangs with greater terror over him, who, known too much to the world, dies unknown to himself."

power and popularity ; and power and popularity were (I know not why, for he was eminently able, and generous to profusion) always denied him.

Without success in these, his very ability and prominence in every thing else, whether in political knowledge, in the arts and liberal studies, or a very general information, and above all, the sacrifices he made for popularity in vain, were only a source of mortification to him, which he could not disguise.

Conscious of his endowments, his object was high office, through the *public* voice rather than private influence ; and while he could not obtain it, he daily saw quieter and more ordinary men, confessedly his inferiors, preferred before him.

This embittered his private moments ; and though, from a wish to appear above it he indulged in a display of liveliness, anecdote, and conversational gaiety, which made him, perhaps naturally, the most agreeable man in England, yet his spirit was evidently tinged with an inward gloom, which preyed upon him in secret, instead of being the cheerful companion in society, enjoyed by all, which he might have been, he was soured into a captitious and unpleasant satirist, loved by few.

Yet Lord Rochfort had some noble qualities. Though violent when opposed, he was easily appeased, could generously forgive, and never deserted or changed a friend. On the contrary, he was distinguished as a most kind patron, and often obtained advancement for his *protéges*, which he failed in achieving for himself. At the same time, his noblest, but (unchecked as it was by prudence) his most unfortunate propensity, a generosity, profuse even to madness, had brought his fortunes low, though he would not confess it, even to himself ; for he had the soul of a prince, and thought himself and lived like one reckless of consequences.

Every year added to his embarrassments, and told him a tale, which he would not believe, spite of his steward. Vehement in every thing, whether as to opinions or conduct, it was dreadful to see a man of his mind and parts so absolutely ruined, from the want of that common sense without which parts and mind only hasten destruction.

He was eaten up by numerous retainers, which, being the representative of many great feudal families, he thought it

was a sort of duty to their memory to maintain in idleness. He had more than one castle, with all royalties attached ; to keep up which in almost pristine waste, he sacrificed uselessly one-half of his revenues. With nothing like their means, but with a view to popularity, he emulated the feasts and pageants of his ancestors ; nor, though he was yearly poorer and poorer, would he reduce the scale of his magnificent benefactions and costly compliments to those he often feasted, from royalty down to his country neighbours.

His real charities, too, for which he had a hand open as day, his pensions to decayed families, support to relations, subscriptions to all great institutions, presents to artists, and gallantries to lady friends in jewels and ornaments—all these were, like Anthonio's losses,

“ Enough to press a royal merchant down.”

But the very suspicion of this neutralized all his sacrifices to obtain that consequence and power for which in part he made them ; and to his mortification he found, that to ruin himself made no way with either the court or the people.

A magnificence which it was thought could not continue was slighted, though for a time its benefits were accepted. He was sometimes even thwarted, or not supported, by those whom his liberality had fed, or his attentions flattered ; and he discovered in the language of Johnson, on the character of his prototype Timon, that he had scattered bounty, but conferred no benefit, and bought flattery, but not friendship.

All this had at last its usual effect—he thought himself ill-used by his fellow-man, and shewed strong symptoms of cynicism. He did not absolutely hate mankind, but he often shunned them, and suspecting everybody's motives, felt a canker at his heart, which, even under the show of hilarity, was detected in a moment.

No ; the Marquess of Rochfort, any more than Lord Felix, was not happy.

These two noble persons engaged all my attention, as I have said, at the dinner I am recording at Lord Castleton's. For, as I had heard everywhere of Lord Felix's grandeur and luxury, surpassing all modern, and almost equalling all ancient story, I expected something of superior mark in his physiognomy, manner, and conversation.

Nothing like it. A little, shrivelled old man, with a dead eye, which never could have been lively; an almost mean person, not at all relieved, but rather the contrary, by a broad red ribbon, characterized his outward man; and as to the inner, as far as it could be collected from conversation, to discuss the merits of the cookery, and the embossed plate, which he did Lord Castleton the honour of saying was next to his own in magnificence, was all we could gather of what his mind or opinions were upon any subject: for, except greedily to devour venison, and swallow repeated glasses of champagne, as if it was an elixir on which his life depended, he scarcely opened his mouth. He chuckled a little, indeed, at some of Lord Rochfort's satirical sallies; which induced the latter to say (aside) to Lord Castleton, that if Felix had not the wit to say ill-natured things himself, he could, at least, enjoy them from others.

A discussion now commencing between Lord Rochfort and Granville, on some point of taste in gothic architecture, occasioned by a visit they had made that morning to Strawberry Hill,—after saying the house was a mere piece of lath and plaster frippery, not fit for a gentleman to live in, Lord Felix fell asleep.

"Peace to his name!" said Lord Rochfort, who had no respect for him.

"Why, he is not dead," observed Granville

"No; but he is buried, which is the next best thing," said his lordship.

The conversation, as it proceeded, afforded room for a little more of the marquess's spleen, in which he did not spare any one who was brought to his notice.

A late minister (Lord Heavitree) being named, who was little famous for his knowledge of state affairs, and who had lately resigned, Lord Rochfort proposed his health, adding, with ironical gravity, a wish for Lord Castleton's sake, that he had remained in the cabinet.

Lord Castleton looked grave, not liking the conversation; but Granville asking his reason for the wish, he observed that a British minister ought, like Cæsar, to have none about him but fat colleagues, like Lord Heavitree.

"Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights;"  
not those who, like Cassius, have

"A lean and hungry look, and think too much.  
Such men are dangerous."

This sally produced a laugh, in which all joined but the noble host, who endeavored to restrain his satirical guest, but without success. For being *en verve*, and not in good humor at Lord Heavitree's place being filled up by a young orator, who had given the highest promise of the consummate ability he afterwards displayed, and who was remarkably thin, he jestingly reproached Lord Castleton, for permitting such an appointment; and pursuing the comparison he had begun with in a sort of paraphrase, said to him,

"I do not know the man you should avoid  
So much as that spare William. He reads much,  
He is a great observer, and he looks  
Quite through the deeds of men; he loves no plays,  
As thou dost, Granville. He hears no music.  
Such a man as he be never at heart's ease,  
And therefore are they very dangerous."

Lord Castleton himself could not help joining in the laugh which this produced.

A very dull speaker in the House being then mentioned, somebody wondered how it was that people could listen to him.

"Why, not to mention its being a capital exertion of patience," said Lord Rochfort, "it is one of 'the pleasures of hope;' one keeps hoping that every sentence will be his last. Just as our friend Gloomly," added he, "never fails to gratify every company into which he goes—that is, at the moment when he gets up to go away."

Here one of the company expressing surprise at a celebrated literary peer being married to so silly a wife—

"Silly, do you call her?" said Lord Rochfort; "I declare I always thought her a very sensible woman, for the only thing I ever heard her say was, that she wondered what anybody could find to admire in her lord's writings."

Lord Castleton now complained of a busy public character, the Earl of——, who was as mischievous, he said, as his understanding would allow him to be.

"If that be all the mischief there is in him," said Lord Rochfort, "he'll never do harm to anybody."

Granville then turned the discourse upon a very voluble

member, just come into Parliament, who was perpetually talking on all sorts of subjects. "In fact," said Granville, "he seems to know everything."

"Every thing," observed Lord Rochfort, "except how to hold his tongue."

Being then asked how Lord B., a great miser, lately dead, had left his fortune, he said he had bequeathed every thing to his wife, even his crabbed temper and his avarice.

After this Granville expressed surprise that such a run was made by Paragraph in his paper against poor Sir Job Prosser (whom the marquess called Sir Job Proser), an inoffensive man, though a would-be politician and author, whose only fault was a little vanity.

"Depend upon it," said the marquess, "they understand each other. Sir Job is rich, and he has made it worth Paragraph's while to abuse him; for Paragraph's abuse is worth paying for, though his praise is not."

In this style, but in spirits evidently forced, he ran on, to the amusement of us all, except Lord Castleton himself, who seemed to lament what he thought this distortion of mind, though in every thing he shewed Lord Rochfort the greatest consideration.

I wondered; for with all this, his personal manner was of great good-nature, though he spared no one, and, like Jacques,

"Thus most invectively he pierced through  
The body of the country, city, court."

## CHAPTER VII.

MORE OF LORD ROCHFORD, TO WHOM I AM SENT ON A MISSION INTO NORTHUMBERLAND.—I AM FULL OF AMBITION, BUT FORGET IT BY AN INCIDENT IN YORKSHIRE, WHICH REVIVES ANOTHER PASSION.

*Flaminius*.—No care! no stop! so senseless of expense,  
That he will neither know how to maintain it,  
Nor cease his flow of riot!

*1st Lord*.—Come, shall we in,  
And taste Lord Timon's bounty?

*2nd Lord*.—He pours it out. Plutus, the god of gold,  
Is but his steward. *SHAKESPEARE.—Timon of Athens.*

Soon after this dinner at Lord Castleton's, Lord Felix  
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died, leaving not a single regret behind, except among his tradesmen ; a sad memorial of the vanity of riches.

Lord Rochfort did not die ; better, perhaps, if he had, rather than live to eat his heart, and waste his substance ; proving not only the same vanity of riches, but also the insufficiency of abilities and accomplishments, however great, to procure whatever *summum bonum* we propose to ourselves.

As Lord Rochfort was frequently at Lord Castleton's, I had a full opportunity of knowing him. Vehemence, and the carrying every feeling, and even opinion to extremity, though little persisted in, were his distinguishing features.

I cannot say he was "stiff in opinions," for he frequently changed them ; nor "always in the wrong," for his penetration often proved him right ; but whatever he was bent upon, he was headlong in pursuing. Shining, too, was necessary to him, whether in public or private, and he exemplified what was said of Wharton :—

" Though listening senates hung on all he spoke,  
The club must hail him master of the joke."

This versatility and this vehemence, conjoined, were, however, next to his imprudence, his greatest enemies.

Yet Lord Castleton had so high an opinion of Lord Rochfort, as a man of genius and commanding talent, and, in fact, bore him such great good-will as a friend, that I expected daily to see a closer union between them in politics. In this I was disappointed ; for though, supported by the whole strength of Lord Castleton, who deemed him, in point of ability, equal to all the rest of the ministers put together, his advancement was opposed by them all, for reasons drawn from the character I have described ; and as their influence in Parliament was great, however wanting individually in talent, my patron was forced to yield.

Thus, a seal seemed set upon Lord Rochfort's peculiar ambition, which was to influence Europe, and *direct* the counsels of his sovereign, not to vegetate on any thing subordinate, however lucrative or splendid. Hence, though every thing short of the cabinet had been offered him—the great court offices, Ireland, and even India—he had refused them all ; and then, from indignation at his disappointments, or,

as he called them, his affronts, he would be all for renouncing a rascally world—would declaim against riches, and be ready, in a fit of temperance,

“To feed on pulse.”

In these capricious moments it was in vain to expect any consistency from him ; for, flying from politics, and even society, he would for a week or two shut himself up in the country, and swear that there was no happiness to be found in grandeur, but only in retreat and moderation.

Why he failed in his greater object, was a problem to most, but was attributed by Granville to his dictatorial as well as satirical temper, not at all softened by a consciousness of his superiority to others. Not only the ministry, but the sovereign himself, was afraid of him for this.

Yet he was too valuable an ally to slight, and no man received more personal attentions from the highest characters at home and abroad. Alas ! this only hastened his ruin ; \*for in this not only the magnificence of his disposition found greater cause for display, but he made it a sort of point of honour to indulge it to the utmost, in order to shew how far his personal consequence was above what he called the injustice of the world.

Foreign as well as native princes were his frequent guests ; the splendour of his house and housekeeping was increased ; his kitchen rivalled that of the king ; and the Greek physician, who visited Anthony's at Alexandria, and came away astonished, though he might not have seen eight wild boars roasting for one supper,\* yet would have blessed himself at the profusion of the English nobleman.

Being a colonel in the army, he thought it was no more than became him, on the king's birth-day, to give dinners to his whole regiment, not only officers and men, but their wives and children, to the amount of near a thousand souls ; and from this feast no officer's lady retired without an expensive present.

The subject of presents, indeed, occasioned sad reminiscences ; for, emulating the magnificent customs of Spain, if a person of consequence professed great admiration of any par-

\* See Plutarch's *Vit. Anton.*



ticular valuable, of the many Lord Rochfort possessed, it was sent to him as a gift ; while a gift made to himself was returned a hundred-fold. Thus the ambassador of France, having presented him with a plume of feathers, worn, *it was said*, by Henri Quatre, a picture of Titian, which the ambassador had admired, and which had cost many hundred pounds, was sent him in return. The pounds had not been paid out of current income, but capital ; but the reputation of the marquess was highly raised by this trait of *grandeur d'ame*, at the court of Versailles.

This, and other instances of the same kind made Lord Castleton, who lamented the evident consequences of such prodigality, tremble for his friend, with whom he remonstrated upon its imprudence, but in vain. It was hence that Lord Castleton used to compare him, as well as Lord Felix (though for very different reasons), to Timon of Athens, particularly in that description of him, which he said he so resembled, that he thought he must have sat for it—

“ If I want gold, steal but a beggar’s dog,  
And give it Timon, why, the dog coins gold :  
If I would sell my horse, and buy twenty more  
Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon ;  
Ask nothing ; *give* it him, it foals me, straight,  
And able horses. No porter at his gate,  
But rather one that smiles, and still invites  
All that pass by.”

“ It is, indeed, lamentable,” observed Granville, who heard Lord Castleton make this remark, “ to see those fine qualities which raise him so much above other men—genius, integrity, spirit, eloquence, and penetrating judgment in every thing but what concerns himself—all thrown away, from the mere want of what no man so low but he may possess it—prudence. For, pursuing your comparison out of the same scene you have cited, I fear the time fast approaches when, if

‘ Every feather sticks in his own wing,  
Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,  
Which flashes now a phoenix.’ ”

“ It is certain,” said Lord Castleton, in reply, “ that with the vehemence and energy of Cardinal de Retz, he has all his recklessness as to money, when, on being reproached with

his debts, the Cardinal said, 'Cæsar at my age, owed more.'"

"I have heard," remarked Granville, "that it is this that disinclines the king to him; at least the *on dit* says that formerly, when there was a question of placing him at the Treasury, his majesty, with characteristic terseness, replied, 'What, trust him with my money, when he cannot take care of his own! No, no; that won't do.'"

Lord Castleton though in a grave humour, prompted by the subject, could not help smiling at this, and rallied Granville upon his gossiping anecdote; which, however, he owned, though it might be false, was very well got up, for it was quite in character.

Sometime after this conversation, I had an opportunity of seeing many of these traits realized in this remarkable, and, in many respects, superior person; for Lord Castleton's melancholy prognostics were sooner realized than he had expected. Execution after execution was levied in his houses both in town and country, and the further dissipation of his fortune by presents or other magnificence was effectually prevented.

This was hard to bear by one of his turn; but it was made worse by the falling off of almost all his followers, who, as he could no longer feast them, no longer flattered him. Lord Castleton did what he could to soften his reverse, by endeavouring to persuade him to accept the richest of the governments abroad which happened to be vacant; but with proud obstinacy he refused, still asserting his claims to one of the highest seats in the cabinet, glancing at his following in the House of Commons, which *had been* not inconsiderable. But, to his dismay and eternal mortification, the two or three members who owed their seats to him, and the whole of the small party which had hitherto acknowledged him as their leader, refused to follow him any longer, and gave their unqualified support to the government.

This disappointment cankered his heart, and, like many other disappointed politicians, he renounced the world, and fled away in earnest, to nurse his resentment in solitude; not now, as it had sometimes been before, in his country palace a short distance from London, but in an ancient and unvisited old border castle in the extremity of the north, called Belford Tower.

This betokened a more permanent resolve than usual, and from this place his letters to Lord Castleton, the only one of the ministry with whom he kept terms, breathed nothing but misanthropy, though he softened it by calling them essays *de contemptu mundi*.

Lord Castleton had attempted, for many months, to recal him, in vain; and at length, still anxious for his active support, particularly on measures then pending, to which there was a very threatening opposition, and upon which he was particularly well informed, he resolved to lay the whole government scheme before him, in all its details, declaring they looked upon him as their chief ally. He added his firm promise to renew his endeavours to overcome the repugnance of some of his colleagues to act with him in the cabinet, and particularly of a duke minister, whom Lord Rochfort considered as much his inferior, but to whom, from his personal court favour, not only he chiefly attributed his exclusion, but accused him of having undermined him with the sovereign.

This offer, Lord Castleton thought, would be the most powerful appeal he could make to him; and as, though ruined, he was still far too high a person to be addressed on such a matter by letter, through a common state messenger, he resolved to send his own secretary, as more becoming the importance of the mission. Accordingly, after being closeted upon it several hours, and furnished with all requisite information both in regard to the subject and the character and former history of the marquess, I was detached on this important embassy.

This attempt at conciliation, and the reason for selecting *me* to conduct it, as more reverential and complimentary towards the person to be conciliated, gave me a lesson in party politics which opened new views to me, both as to men and things. Granville congratulated me upon it, as a proof of my advancing fortune under Lord Caastleton; and that notion, spite of all resolves, was always closely united to the idea of her whom, for the fiftieth time, I had renounced.

Be this as it might, Granville's intimation was by no means lost upon me; for though I was still possessed by a hopeless attachment, yet I felt more and more that it was hopeless, and this left room for ambition to expand itself. The sanguine temper, therefore, of a young mind, obtained its usual

play on this commission of Lord Castleton, and the views of futurity which it gave me much enlivened my journey, at least as far as Ferry-bridge: for there, even without an important incident that occurred, my thoughts would have taken a far different range.

I certainly did not as formerly, quit the old road to York, for the sake of a *more picturesque country and a finer view of the river* ;\* but as I got into the latitude of Foljambe, I found my eyes invariably glancing to the left, and my heart beat high, and palpitated more violently than I wished, when I read on a direction-post at the end of a lane, "The cross-road to Foljambe."

At that moment a carriage, of foreign, and, as I thought, German make, came rattling up, the horses of which were from the same house as mine, but the postillion, who had been lately hired, beckoned his fellow-whip, who drove me, to stop, in order to put him in the right road to Foljambe.

"You should have turned to the left on leaving the bridge," said my boy, "and you will scarcely make out the cross-road."

To make things sure, therefore, the boys asked permission to exchange jobs, which was granted by me, and the gentlemen of the foreign carriage, who I now perceived, by his air, was a man of very distinguished manner and countenance. He seemed about five-and-twenty, and wore a laced manteau, and cap of handsome sable. The arms on his carriage were of many quarterings, and the shield containing them was borne on the breast of a black eagle, spreading over the whole pannel.

When the boys had changed, and the foreign carriage had moved on, I naturally asked my driver if he knew who the gentleman was whom he had been driving. Think of my surprise, I might say my agitation, when he told me, upon the information of his valet, that he was a German prince, and cousin to a *sort* of king.

"Good heavens!" I involuntarily exclaimed, "and do you know his name?"

"I cannot pernounce it," said the boy, mounting his horse, "but it was something about Sacks, and something else which I cannot remember."

\* See Vol. I.

"Was it Saxe Eisenach?" asked I, with agitation.

"That were like it," answered the postillion, and flourishing his whip, the chaise moved on.

"Good heavens!" again cried I—"he is her cousin, and is going to enjoy her society in the ease of family intimacy;" and I threw myself back in my chaise, with I know not what forebodings.

My reverie upon this lasted many minutes; when reason recovering, I rallied and asked myself—why not? Why should not the most natural thing in the world, a visit from a near relation, take place? But above all, what was it to me? O! but he was so handsome, so striking in his manner, so well dressed! Well, and again, what was that to me?

Alas! I did not like to answer the question. Yet, having asked, I wished to answer it with—"nothing"—but the word, like the Amen of Macbeth, stuck in my throat.

I tried to rouse myself, but conjecture upon conjecture pressed upon me all the way to York. My mission, Lord Rochfort, and Lord Castleton himself, were forgotten, and I could think of nothing but Bertha and her handsome cousin—a prince, too!

Was I relieved when I got to York? Let those answer who have ever felt the pangs of, what I thought, despised love, made sharper by jealousy.

On going to the coffee-room to order a mutton chop, and see the London papers, just come in, the first thing I read was the following among the arrivals:—"Prince Adolphus of Saxe Eisenach, who immediately took post for Yorkshire, it is said, upon a very tender errand, as a treaty of marriage with his cousin, Miss Hastings the beautiful heiress of Foljambe Park, has long been on the tapis."

The paper fell from my hands. I turned pale, and was seized with tremor. O! how well was I cured!

When I recovered from the shock, I consoled myself in the only manner by which I could be consoled. I would not believe it. How was it possible that this could be, and I not informed of it? Could Granville or lady Hungerford not know it? Alas! I thought they did know it, though they refused to communicate it to me, thinking perhaps that ignorance was bliss; and hence, at once, the solution of the mystery I had so often endeavored to get them to disclose.

And yet it could not be concealed, and therefore why not tell it? Here was another doubt. But again, on the other hand, what so likely? The connection and intercourse always kept up; the engraving of the young hussar, and his coat armor, hung in the place of honor, in Bertha's summer-house at Foljambe; the packet from Prince Adolphus, which Bertha took from her father when I was last at the park; the mutual advantages of the match; the probable wishes, and perhaps dying injunctions, of Bertha's mother; and above all, the seeming personal merit of the young prince—Oh! how were not the heart and head made the sport of all these contending arguments!

But at length an apparently all-conquering one put an end to doubt. The secret was now out, why Bertha had rejected Sir Harry Melford and Lord Albany, and always kept so aloof from the world; and the unwillingness of her father to encourage their offers, was here well explained. It was clear that she and the prince had long been betrothed.

This settled the question for a while, till doubt was again revived by the total ignorance in which Foljambe must have been, of a thing of such importance, when he promoted so urgently the suit of his friends.

This puzzled me more than ever. I walked up and down the coffee-room, unmindful of the gaze of strangers. My dinner had long been on the table, cold and untouched. I read the paper again and again, but with no other result than the same credibility attached to it, and the same wishes not to believe it.

At length I called for pen, ink, and paper; I copied the paragraph, and inclosed it in a letter to Granville, imploring him, as he valued my recovery, to tell me if the news was true; assuring him, if it was, that it would be far better to know it than the excitement of uncertainty.

I began a letter also to Lady Hungerford upon the same subject; but exclusive of the freedom of that intrusion, my pride forbade my going on, and my chaise being announced, I threw myself into it, paying for a dinner I had not eaten, and scarcely recovered my clearness of thought till I got to North Allerton.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I PARTIALLY RECOVER FROM MY ALARM, AND AM DIVERTED FROM IT BY MEETING AN OLD SCHOOLFELLOW, WHO GIVES ME INFORMATION RESPECTING THE MARQUESS.

My good lord, have great care  
I be not found a talker.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Henry VIII.*

THIRTY miles is a long way for a man, who never had a hope, to continue to resist proofs that he is hopeless. What was there, after all, to make my case different from what it was when I left London? Strange that I had not asked myself this question before? But the surprise; the suddenness; the encounter with the very man himself; his handsome face his title; his mustachios!—All this threw me off my guard.

“Who could be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,  
Loyal and neutral in a moment? No man.  
The expedition of my violent love  
Outran the power of reason.”

By degrees, however, reason resumed the upper hand (that is, as much as ever it had had it), and grew stronger and stronger as I progressed farther and farther from the scene of my late encounter, and the neighbourhood which it always maddened me to think of. I became cooler for my thirty miles' reflection; and, by the time I got to Newcastle, the thousand ships I saw in the Tyne, and the thousand coal-carts on the roads, all so incompatible with romance (for who ever heard of love in a coal-pit?), dissipated most of my doubts and anxieties, and brought all the realities of the world once more before me.

I again began to think of Lord Rochfort, and his disappointments, so different from my own; and felicitated myself that I had not yet the mortifications of ambition to add to those of love.

At Newcastle I found that I had still fifty miles to Belford Tower, and had therefore still more time to recover myself, and forget the horrors inspired by Prince Adolphus and his mustachios. In effect, I made such good use of the opportunity, that by the time I got to Alnwick, I was in a very fair frame of mind to execute my political commission.

The princely Alnwick, too, brought very different scenes before me—Hotspur and the Douglasses—and I felt very different from a modern lover and a little secretary.

This was farther confirmed by the sight of Warkworth Castle, though in ruins, which elevated me into my ancestor, Lord Bardolfe himself. For it was here (and I endeavoured to trace out the identical spot) that old Northumberland had walked forth into his orchard, when Bardolfe's sanguine soul communicated to him the news of a Shrewsbury victory, afterwards so fearfully contradicted.

"Who keeps the gate? ho! Where is the earl?" said I, as I approached the venerable remains; and as no porter was there to answer me, I answered myself with,

"His lordship has walked forth into the orchard,  
Please it, your honour, knock but at the gate,  
And he himself will answer."

It is certain I never felt the Bardolfe and Clifford blood tingle in my veins so powerfully as it did in the recollection of the interesting scene which followed with Northumberland, in the very place where it was supposed to have happened. Nor was I a little proud of my ancestor for his devotion to the cause, for which he declared himself ready, having failed once, to peril his life again, and actually lost it.

"I inherit with his blood," said I to myself, "all Lord Bardolfe's sanguine temper: pray heaven, I inherit not his misfortunes!"

As I had, however, twenty miles farther to get to my journey's end, and meant to take a hasty dinner at Alnwick, to which I was obliged to return to resume the road, I was forced to bid adieu to all these honouring reminiscences, and hurry away.

What was my surprise on re-entering the town, to be accosted by an old Sedbergh schoolfellow, and fellow-collegian at Queen's, of the name of Parrot, who had left us to join partnership with his father, an attorney, and was now settled at Belford, only three miles from the castle.

Though I had had no intimacy with him, and he had a sort of fluent pertness about him, not over agreeable, yet as it was not ill-natured, and he seemed sincerely glad to see me, I could not refuse his proposal (being at the same inn too) to dine together, which produced much conversation.



Having heard of my public situation, when he learned my destination, "Hah!" said he. "Indeed! going to the marquess's. Political business, I suppose. But you will be out there, I can tell you, whatever it be, for the marquess has done with politics: can't abide 'em; hates 'em like poison; nay, says all politicians are rogues, and that there is more honesty in me, and Jim Juniper, the gauger, of Belford, than all the ministers put together; and this he proves by asking us to dinner at least once a week. Fact," added he, seeing that I looked surprised; "can't do without us; that is, I don't know for Jupiter, but certainly me, who, you know, have had education like himself."

I was stupified with surprise at this intimation, which I did not in the least know what to make of, though from his talkativeness, I thought Parrot would explain it. I could not, however, help saying,

"And pray, may I ask how all this came about, that you, the son of a country lawyer, whom I remember at Queen's proud if a little country squire spoke to you, and very proud if he condescended to walk with you in the High Street, should now be the companion of a great nobleman, who, you say, cannot do without you?"

"O!" replied Parrot, "the secret is a very easy one; and, as for obligation, be assured it is perfectly mutual, if indeed the balance is not on my side."

This heat all; and I asked how that could be?

"Why, how little," said he, "with all your experience, do you know of the world. When you arrive, look at his frowning old castle, in the midst of the desert called his Park, to which the approach on any side can only be over miles and miles of barren moor, so that he has not a neighbour, except myself and the gauger! And as nobody will come so far to see him for any amusement Castle Dull, as I call it, can afford, do you think he is not obliged to me for my company? If I were not here, he would even put up with the gauger by himself. No, no; I was only right when I said the balance was on my side."

"I own," said I, "I should not have thought this; no disparagement to *you*, because, as you say, you are a man of education, like himself; but as to the gauger, who, I suppose, is not so lettered——"

"Lettered!" cried Parrot, "he knows no letters at all, except those he receives from the Excise Office and writes in return, and in these last I always help him with the spelling."

"But how do you account for it?" asked I; "for I have the honour of knowing the marquess, and know that he has a most accomplished mind. I know, moreover, that he has the character of being a proud man."

"Proud enough, of all conscience," interrupted my vivacious friend; "but what is pride, when he is by himself at Castle Dull, and nobody to shew it to, or even to converse with, but us and his servants? and, as for them, I should be much surprised if their master is half so happy, for there is a great deal of merriment in their hall, though none at all in his dinning-room. Indeed, Jim Juniper says he would much rather drink punch with Simcoe, the butler, than claret with my lord."

"There is merriment then in the hall?"

"Yes; but only when my lord is out of the way for if within hearing he stops it all."

"You quite amaze me," said I, "and I should be glad if you could account for it."

"Why, you see," returned he, "I can look as far into a mill-stone as another. I am sorry to say my lord marquess, though so great a man, is——"

"What?"

"Done up. Fact, I assure you. And even if I were not his confidential lawyer—that is to say, for the Northumberland estate, which, by the bye, and between ourselves—but I hope I am safe—(here he looked round the room and at the door).

"Oh, quite so," returned I; "depend upon it our conversation goes no further."

"Well, I only meant," proceeded he, "that the marquess saying all men in office are rogues, and you being one, you might——"

Here I laughed so heartily, that it stopped him. After a moment he went on, by observing,

"Even if I did not know that the Northumberland, and, as I have heard, almost all his other property, is dipt beyond recovery—at least by him, which is enough to make any one

look black—still it is easy to see that there is something else that gnaws him ; and that is the reason why, after being not over amused alone, he likes to amuse himself with laughing at the gauger, who, I must say, is a neat article in his way.”

“And you?”

“O, me! Why, he has often business to talk about, and pours out his complaints to me, not only against the country bankers for being so costive about advances, but also against the world in general, particularly the politicians in it, all of whom, he says, are fools or knaves, envious, lying, and slandering, treacherous, and I know not what besides. Hence, he says, he would rather live in woods by himself, and eat nuts like a squirrel, than receive and give feasts, as he used to do in London and Northamptonshire ; and that’s the reason why he has shut himself up in Castle Dull, which had not been inhabited for fifty years, till he came down to it a few months ago. But mind, you are upon honour, poz, and won’t peach ; for it would get me into a devil of a scrape, *being a confidential agent, you know*, if, though it be true, I were to tell the world he is done up.”

I again assured my *trusty* chum and mirror of confidants that he was safe, and thanking him for this information, which was to me very important, or might be so, in the affair I had in hand, I discharged the reckoning, and remounting my chaise, proceeded on my journey.

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## CHAPTER IX.

I ARRIVE AT THE MARQUESS’S CASTLE.—AN ACCOUNT OF IT.

Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle ;  
Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parle,  
Into its ruin’d ears.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Richard II.*

BELFORD Castle, or Tower, for both names were common to it, was, as I have said, still twenty miles off, and it was

evening (the sun being set) when I approached it. Parrot's account of the intervening country, particularly after I got to the town of Belford, was by no means exaggerated. Such a black, naked, wet moor, or rather morass, could hardly be seen, even in the wilder parts of Northumberland. I say wilder, because the beauties of the Tyne, the noble site of Hexham, and many other fine lines of the county, have always been admired by me.

Here, however, if a man was intent upon finding a place to increase his disgusts at the world, I thought he could not have succeeded better than the marquess, when his election fell upon the spot in which this ancestral fortress had been placed. It must have been of this bleak and iron region that old Canterbury thought, when, speculating how to secure the country from the inroads of the Scot, while Henry V. warred in France, he assures his master,

" They of those marches, gracious sovereign,  
Shall be a wall sufficient to defend  
Our inland from the pilfering borderers."

According to their present appearance, the good archbishop might rather have said, that no wall was necessary, for there was nothing to pilfer. Except, indeed, the castle itself, and the park surrounding it, abruptly starting up, like an oasis in the desert, there was nothing to be seen for miles but slate quarries and wet heather, on which browsed a score or two skeletons of cattle and stunted sheep.

By the park-gate was a mere country hovel, by way of lodge, out of which issued a dirty old Hecate, to open it, without shoes or stockings, and with only one petticoat, in which, too, there was more than one rent.

When I entered the park, what struck me was, its wild and uncultivated look, though a paradise to the surrounding country. The ground plot of it was rather peculiar, composed of hills of different shapes, conical, pyramidal, and tabular, some of them of steep ascent, some presenting a dark mass of planting, others quite bare, or merely dotted with trees.

But though among these latter were some old oaks and elms, the bushes and brakes were in far greater abundance, full of wild berries, not unpicturesque at this time of year, but altogether left to nature, without a glimpse of art. There

was certainly nothing like "meadows trim and daisies pied;" but there were shallow brooks with fringed banks in plenty, and two or three large fish-ponds in succession, the abode of carp, tench, and wild ducks, flocks of which last flew up as we passed, so that I thought I was on a shooting excursion on the wastes of an extensive manor, instead of approaching the mansion of a great nobleman. Even the carriage road, which had once been gravelled, had been allowed to cover itself with grass, docks, and thistles, and the quartering was desperate. The deer were as wild as all the rest, just shewing their horns and looking at us through the glades that led up the hills, and then precipitately retreating to the covert on their tops.

And yet, though not what I expected so near to the dwelling of a grandee, and what all Browns and Reptons would have been shocked with, and Price, perhaps, have written a book to prove a solecism in taste, there was something in it that pleased me. It was certainly no more than in unison with a massive, antique, and neglected tower, which looked down upon me, with no hospitable or friendly air, from the top of a steep and rocky mount, which it cost my horses infinite toil, not without danger, to ascend.

The castle itself was, however, interesting in this, that it was a real old border strong-hold, erected in the time of Edward II., and appeared, externally at least, just as it had been left in the days of Henry VII., when the ancestor of the marquess succeeded to it. It stood, as I said, upon a craggy hill, rising suddenly at the end of the park, and overlooking the sea, with a distant view of the Tweed, the white sails upon which proceeding to Berwick could in a clear day be seen. Like the Tantallon, immortalized by Scott, on the land side,

"Its varying circle did combine  
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,  
And bastion, tower, and antage coign."

But seaward there was no need for these, for, in the language of the same poet,

"The far projecting battlement,  
The steepy rock and frantic tide,  
Approach of human step denied;  
And thus these lines and ramparts rude  
Were left in deepest solitude."\*

\* Marmion.

Deep indeed ; for, unless when thronged with a numerous border garrison, its inhabitants must have led,

“ In high baronial pride,  
A life both dull and dignified.”

This indeed struck me potently, when I had scaled the steep on which the tower was situated, and saw not a creature, any more than in the long drive I had taken through the park, to give sign of habitation.

The evening was grey and solemn, the Tower looked sullen, and the union flag, which in general spread itself out to the winds that almost constantly sweep over these heights, had now dropt listlessly down, and closely lapt itself round the staff, as if from very feebleness.

I know not why the gloom, which the loneliness of the scene occasioned, got such hold of me ; but I have often thought of it since, and was carried instantly back to it, when, many years afterwards, I read in the poet I have just quoted,

“ St. George’s banner, broad and gay,  
Now faded, as the fading ray  
Less bright, and less was flung ;  
The evening gale had scarce the power  
To wave it on the donjon tower,  
So heavily it hung.”\*

Although, therefore, there was still a sort of grandeur about the place, it was an uncheerful one ; and what I at first thought a pert phrase of my friend Parrot, in calling it Castle Dull, did not now appear to be absolutely unjust.

Having surmounted the steep, my chaise drove up to the massive oak gate in the Tower, studded with knobs of iron, of apparently a pound weight each. Above was a groove, in which the ribs of an old portcullis, now no longer sliding, but fixed, were still visible.

What was remarkable ; instead of a bell, a huge brazen trumpet, as large as any speaking trumpet, hung by an iron chain at the side of the gate, which the post-boy, who had been more than once here since the marquess came, said was to be sounded to bring people to the door. I bade him there-

\* Marmion.

fore give a blast, which he did, but it brought no one ; its only effect being to produce the ferocious baying of more than one blood-hound.

Except for this, and the roaring of the sea below, the stillness was uninterrupted and awful. My postillion began to misgive himself, particularly as the twilight sunk and darkness approached.

"I have always heard strange things of this here castle," said he, "for no one lived in it for a hundred years, before the marcus came ; and they say, in the warring times with the Scotch, prisoners have been sometimes starved to death, by being left in the vaults under this here Tower."

"Well, I hope," answered I, "this won't be our fate ; but it is odd that everybody seems to have left the house."

"It will be aukurd," replied the boy, thinking of his own situation, "to find the way back down that sharp twist, and through the dark wood."

"Try again at the trumpet," said I.

"It's no use," he returned, "for the marcus, they say, do walk, o'ten till supper time, up and down by the sea-shore, and then Mister Simcoe, the butler, he always go down to our house at Belford to be among his friends. None's the wonder, for he have none here."

The tramp of a horse coming up the hill was now heard, which seemed to give the boy some relief ; nor was I without it myself, for I too began to have misgivings ; not as to ghosts of starved prisoners, but lest some change or caprice in the marquess might have made him abandon his Tower, which seemed certainly sufficiently denuded of comfort to make such a measure not unreasonable.

To the postillion's great joy, the horseman, who had now come up, was Mr. Simcoe himself ; not from Belford, but from Berwick, where he had been sent by his lord, on business to the bank, and had been absent all day. As soon as he arrived, I recognised him as Lord Rochfort's major-domo in town, and he me, as one of his master's visitors. This made us acquainted, and learning from whom I came, he civilly, but doubtingly, said he *believed* my lord would see me, having come so far, but was not sure ; for he was regularly denied to all visitors whatever, even the Lord Lieutenant himself.

"But he is not at home," said I, "nor any one else, not even a maid-servant."

Mr. Simcoe smiled, and observed, that he had left his lordship confined by the gout in his hand ; and as for the maids, they never dared, when he (Mr. Simcoe) was absent, to open the gate to friend or foe, after eight o'clock. Then, taking a large whistle from his pocket, instead of applying to the trumpet, he blew it shrilly, which he said would give more certain intelligence to those within of who was without ; and in effect, a female voice having now answered, and the dogs being secured, the gate turned upon its rusty hinges, and I was, not without some satisfaction, after a long, rough day, let into the great hall of Belford Tower.

It was (I was going to say) *lighted* by an immense iron triangular machine, suspended by an iron chain, from the high embowed roof, on which an immense lamp of the same metal, gave sign of darkness visible, rather than anything like light ; certainly the illumination necessary to exhibit the character of this vast apartment was entirely wanting. All that I could observe in its immediate vicinity to the lamp was, that to the walls were appended a number of cross-bows and casques, and that several bats were flitting through the vault above.

Mr. Simcoe, however, who had apologized for the dimness and disappeared, now returned with a couple of wax candles, with which he preceded me through another door, not so large, but almost as strong, as that at the entrance, into what he called a dining-room, of large dimensions, but with a low and groyned ceiling. Here there were some signs of comfort, an Axminster carpet over the stone floor ; several modern easy-chairs, intermixed with ancient, straight, high-backs ; a handsome oak table, covered with a green-cloth, on which were many books ; and several pictures of ancestors grim and grisly indeed, but some of whom had been wardens of the marches, and made this castle their head-quarters.

In the chimney, which spread over the whole of one end of the room, were two massive iron dogues, mounted with brass, on which billets of wood were laid, in case fire were wanted, and as the night had set in drizzly and damp, Mr. Simcoe, in his care of me, immediately applied one of the candles to it, and in a moment we were in a blaze.



The hospitable butler then informed me that he had sent up one of the maids to see whether the marquess, who was a fixture on his couch with the gout, could be talked to, before he ventured to acquaint him with my arrival, but that his lordship was asleep, and he begged me therefore to wait.

All this was in very good style, and at least, if the proverb held, the behavior of the man indicated no misanthropy in the master. The inference, however, was contradicted by what I presently observed, and which I owned astonished me; for, taking up one of the bougies to look at the pictures, I saw in large old English characters, painted on a pannel over the side-board,

#### APEMANTUS'S GRACE.

"Immortal Gods! I crave no pelf,  
I pray for no man but myself;  
Grant I may never prove so fond,  
To trust man on his oath or bond;  
Or a harlot for her weeping;  
Or a dog that seems a-sleeping;  
Or a keeper with my freedom;  
Or my friends, if I should need 'em.  
Amen! so fall to't—  
Rich men sin, and I eat root."\*

Expressing my surprise at this, Mr. Simcoe observed that it was thought the greatest curiosity in the castle.

"It was not then placed there by your lord?" said I.

"O dear, no; for nobody knows how old it is; only my lord ordered it to be new varnished, so as to make it more plain; and he did think of gilding the letters, he so liked the inscription, but was afraid of spoiling the antiquity of it."

"And is there no tradition of it to be found in the castle?" asked I.

"My lord, I believe, has a book about it somewhere," answered the civil Mr. Simcoe, "but I never took the liberty of inquiring; only Mr. Parrot, his attorney, told me that it was supposed to be put there by one of the Earls of Northumberland, to whom the place then belonged, and who, being in trouble, concealed himself here in Queen Elizabeth's time,

\* *Timon of Athens.*

till he went to Scotland, and was there betrayed by all his friends, and beheaded.\* This is all I know."

"A very good account," said I, "of the inscription;" and I would have gone on with my questions, but was stopt by a maid's coming in to say the marquess was awake, and desired to see Mr. Simcoe; a summons which that gentleman immediately obeyed.

In a few minutes he returned, with his lord's compliments, and request that I would deliver the despatch I had brought from Lord Castleton to him (Simcoe), and my lord hoped to be well enough to see me the next day; meantime desired, that a bed and supper might be prepared for me, and that I would dismiss my chaise.

The latter was done, very much to the discomfort of the driver, who had been making good cheer in the buttery, and would have had no objection to have continued it during the night, instead of encountering the spirits of the Scotch prisoners starved to death in the donjon, who, all Belford relieved, as they did their Bible, wandered about the park all night.

It may be supposed that I accepted the marquess's hospitality, and enjoyed a comfortable supper, followed by a tumbler of Mr. Simcoe's punch, which I found the gauger (no doubt a good judge) had not overrated.

The great major-domo being talkative, as well as civil, and I sufficiently curious, I asked him if he knew any thing of the history of the castle, and whether the tradition of the post-boy, as to the starving of prisoners in the donjon, was true.

He said that in one instance it was, which was quite enough to engraft a hundred others upon it. It seems that in the days of Elizabeth a prisoner was brought in, and as usual committed to the donjon by the then warder, Sir Wilfred Rochfort, an ancestor of my lord, who never parted with the keys, and who meant to dispose of him according to law. Unhappily, within an hour afterwards, he was sent for by Lord Hunsdon, governor of Berwick, to reinforce that garri-

\* The earl alluded to must have been Thomas Earl of Northumberland, who, being guilty of a little matter of rebellion in favour of Popery, took refuge, and lay concealed in different parts of the borders, till he was betrayed by Morton, Regent of Scotland, whom he had protectep in his need when an exile in England. Morton delivered him up to Hunsdon, governor of Berwick, who sent him to York, where he was beheaded.

son, expecting to be attacked by the Scots. The service lasted near a week, during which the prisoner was forgotten, and not remembered till the return of Sir Wilfred, whose misery may be conceived, when the unhappy man was found dead, with part of his arm eaten off by himself.

The story ended with true poetical justice, for it was said that Sir Wilfred never was his own man again. Nor was that wonderful, if the close of the legend was true ; for it seems that, though a powerful, strong man, he never could stir out alone, without encountering his victim, who shewed his bitten arm, which wielded a sword notwithstanding. With this he forced the knight to fight him, and always came off conqueror. This was proved by Sir Wilfred never returning home without his person exhibiting signs that he had been overthrown in the mire.

With this story to comfort me, I followed the relator, who now acted the part of chamberlain, up at least a hundred steps, to my bedroom, formerly a barrack for twenty men, and where many a swinkt borderer had deposited his limbs, after battling all day with moss troopers on this, or perhaps joining in a foray on the other side the Tweed.

I blessed myself as I passed through deserted chambers, or echoing passages whose only inhabitants for years had been bats and spiders, till I laid me down in a bed, not over comfortable, and in no very good humour with my undertaking, and still less with the mode in which a disappointed marquess chose to indulge his disgusts at the world.

My regrets at this lasted some time, till they were lost in feelings still less agreeable ; for I could never close my eyes but I encountered the bitten arm of the starved prisoner, and also, strange to say, the handsome mustachios of Prince Adolphus, who, with the whole train of jealous thoughts which this generated, rose perpetually and sensibly before me.

This, the shrieking of the weathercocks above, and the roaring of the sea below, rendered my night wakeful and melancholy, to say nothing of the dreary vastness of an unfurnished border castle, half in ruins, calculated for a company of a hundred brisk soldiers, but whose garrison was reduced to a gouty, discontented peer, with one male and two female menials for the whole of his retinue.

Had I been superstitious, or had any thing been on my

conscience, all this would have murdered sleep ; but Youth, and his younger brother, Hope, will bear up against greater difficulties than these before their buoyancy can be repressed. I succeeded, therefore, at last, in allaying all spectres, of whatever kind, that endeavoured to disturb my rest, and I fell into a refreshing slumber, from which I was only awakened by the sun shining in all his splendour

“ From his chamber in the east.”

I immediately sprang up, and was gratified with a noble view of the German Ocean, and our good town of Berwick-upon-Tweed in the distance.

While dressing, the attentive Simcoe came in to administer to my wants, and told me his lord was better, and hoped to get down stairs after breakfast. Meantime, looking round at the sorry equipment of the room, he expressed fears that my night could not have been comfortable.

“ Rather different, Sir, this, from Grosvenor Square,” said he, “ and still more from the house and fine gardens of Beaulieu, my lord’s grand place in Northamptonshire. When we shall get away from this, and return there, I don’t know. But, Lord ! Sir, I am glad you’re come, for I hope it is to take his lordship back again from this sad place, where he has nobody to speak to but a vulgar exciseman, and nothing to do but dig in his garden—for he actually does both—great nobleman as he is. I am sure if I had not known him, man and boy, these twenty years, I would not stay in this wild place an hour ; no servants but two maids, and a groom and gardener out of doors. I know my lord as well, and better, than he does himself, and for all his talk about that Apemantus over the side-board, and not trusting man or woman, I am sure he will never do out of London or Beaulieu. What can be the reason of it, I can’t find out, but I do hope, Sir, you have brought him some good news, for nothing else will cure his gout.”

“ And will that do it, Mr. Simcoe ?” asked I.

“ I don’t know, Sir, but I wish there never was such a thing as a newspaper ; for he takes them all in, and never reads one but it makes him worse. But as you are now dressed, I will if you please, go and prepare your breakfast ; though I fear you will never find the way down without me, so if you please I will stop and show you.”

Feeling that he was right, I gladly accepted the offer, and followed him down, as I had followed him up, through a labyrinth of passages and staircases, till I found myself again seated under Apemantus's Grace, in the dining-room. I read it again, and agreed with the sagacious Simcoe, that he knew his lord as well, if not better than he did himself, when he professed to admire such a piece of cynicism.

Breakfast over, I began to be anxious for the sight of the noble hermit who so distrusted his species. In fact, from what I saw, notwithstanding its want of keeping, I was fearful lest the feudal interest about the place, and the self-flattery of every man who pretends to despise the world, might influence him to be obstinate, at least for a while, against all overtures to bring him back.

Of his total unfitness for the life he had chosen, except while under the operation of his spleen, I was as convinced as Mr. Simcoe himself. Oh! what a contrast to the really philosophic and self-sufficing Manners, and how different this gloomy castle from the cheerful Grange!

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## CHAPTER X.

### OF MY INTERVIEW WITH THE MARQUESS, AND THE INTERESTING CONVERSATION I HAD WITH HIM.

How now, my lord, why do you keep alone,  
Of sorriest fancies your companions making?

SHAKESPEARE.—*Macbeth.*

This is in thee a nature but affected,  
A poor, womanly melancholy, sprung  
From change of fortune. Why this spade? this place?  
This slave-like habit, and these looks of care?

*Timon of Athens.*

At length, from a sort of bustle in the hall, I concluded that the marquess was approaching, and he presently entered, leaning on Simcoe. Neither the gout, nor his savage abode, nor even his new companions, Parrot and the guager, had

taken from his natural politeness; and, though strangely arrayed in a sort of Flushing pilot coat, with a coarse handkerchief round his neck, and canvass trousers on his legs, he could not divest himself of that air of a man of quality which belonged to him.

The butler having withdrawn, "You are welcome," said he, shaking hands with me, "to such comfort as my poor house can afford—bad, I am afraid, at best, and Simcoe gives a deplorable account of your quarters last night; but it suits a banished man."

"Banished!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, banished; not by law, but the world, which I have endeavoured to serve; and not the first whom it has so rewarded;—as that book, the only one I now read, will prove any hour of the day."

And he pointed to a large old folio edition of Plutarch, printed in the time of James I., which lay open on a table.

"To be sure," said I, "there are too many instances in ancient story of the ingratitude of nations—Themistocles, Aristides, and Cicero—though the latter had been voted the father of his country; and above all, Camillus, after being five times dictator. But I trust your lordship will not fix that stain upon the people of England, who honour you, present or absent."

"No," said he, quickly, "not upon the people, who, upon the whole, are honest enough: but what shall we say to the vile intrigues of mean courtiers, who blind their king, or to the king himself, for consenting to be blinded?"

"Those I come from," replied I, "as your lordship well knows, are not of that description."

"I believe Castleton is an honest man," returned he; "but he is swayed by knaves or fools, whom he prefers to the person whom yet he consults, and whose assistance he condescends to *crave*."

He said this proudly, with an emphasis on the word *crave*, and, as I thought, with a smile of bitter satisfaction.

"With submission, your lordship may find that the *preference* you suppose neither does nor can exist, and that such preference is not compatible with that sense of your superiority, which has alone subjected you to the trouble of this mission."

He received my compliment complacently enough, adding, with sufficient grace of manner, that whatever answer he might be forced to give to Lord Castleton's despatch, he could not help thanking him for the messenger he had chosen to convey it.

This was too civil not to be recognised by a profound bow, particularly when he added, "Lord Castleton tells me you have his entire confidence on this occasion, and I shall therefore not scruple to give you mine, if only as the best mode of answering his application. He knows how long I have been disgusted with courts, from their false estimation of those who follow them, and how long I have meditated such a retreat as this. Tell him, therefore, though late, I am here the *courtisan detrompe du monde*, and exclaim with him,

"En vain pour satisfaire a nos laches envies  
 Nous passons pres des rois tout le temps de nos vies,  
 A souffrir des mepris et plier les genoux.  
 Ce qui'ils peuvent n'est rien ; ils sont comme nous sommes,  
 Veritables hommes,  
 Et meurent commes nous."

"Your lordship will pardon me," I replied, "if I remind you of that part of Lord Castleton's letter, in which he states, that when your country wants you, you have no right to such a retreat."

"A sorry one, God wot," observed he, looking at his own dress, and the homeliness of the room ; "but for the wants of the country, read those of the cabinet, and you will be nearer the truth. In return for which, tell me what the cabinet has ever done for *me*, that I should help *them*, or what they *would* do for me, if they could stand alone. I own this meanness only makes me more in love with these bare walls, in which, rough and weather-beaten as they are, I breathe an honester atmosphere than surrounds their palaces. Pray, are you much acquainted with Raleigh—his poetry I mean ? Did you ever read his *Lye* ?

"An odd subject."

"But well treated, and full of philosophy. Excuse me if I refer a stanza or two to your examination, and then say if I am wrong :—

Tell men of high condition,  
 That rule affairs of state,

Their purpose is ambition,  
 Their practice only hate ;  
 And if they once reply,  
 Then give them all the lye.

Feeling this, can you wonder at my resolution, or at my reaping what I promised myself from it ?

" I again say, therefore, tell them how you found me : and, but for my disorder, you would have found me with this mattock in my garden—(here he took up a spade, which stood in a corner of the room)—which, like Abdolonymus, I would not quit to be a king."

Had I not thought he was deceiving himself, this speech would have staggered me, for he, at least, *looked* very firm. Yet, from what I had heard of him, I *did* think him self-deceived, and would not yield. Addressing him, therefore, more solemnly, I said,

" Had I been sent to an ordinary character, my lord, I might feel forced to retire with this answer ; but as I am very sure that you love your country too well to abandon her when she needs your known powers, merely because you feel injured by individuals, who, Lord Castleton himself allows, cannot compare with you,—forgive me if I endeavor to combat your resolution."

" Well Sir," he replied, " to show you that my conduct proceeds from rational determination, and not capricious disgust, I am ready to hear you."

" It is only what I expected, as well as hoped," returned I, " Your lordship mentioned characters in history ungratefully treated by their country. Do not resemble them only in that. Recollect how they stifled their resentments when their country wanted them. You have yourself shown me an important volume of examples in this respect (and I opened the Plutarch he had pointed at). Do not refuse to be Aristides, and, above all, the Camillus of that book. Their banishment did not prevent them from listening to the voice of their rivals, when they wanted their aid ; or from delivering their native land from the evils that threatened it.

" Excellent," said he, with a sarcastic air. " You have not, I see, been at Oxford, any more than at Castleton's right hand, for nothing. Know then, were the Gaul or the Persian at the gates, I would, like Camillus or Aristides, arm to



repel them : but to help a set of ordinary pretenders (you know I mean not Castleton), merely to keep offices with which they have no business—too jealous to act with me, too weak to do without me—would be little resembling the patriots you so much wish me to follow.”

“And yet your lordship,” returned I, “resembles Camillus in more than one respect, which has perhaps escaped you.”

“I understand not your meaning,” said he, with some curiosity, as I turned over Plutarch.

“Permit me,” I replied, having found the passage I wanted, “to read the following account. ‘As he (Camillus) departed from the city, he turned to the Capitol, and stretching forth his hands, prayed the gods that if, without any fault of his own, but merely through the malice and violence of the people, he was driven into banishment, the Romans might quickly have cause to repent of it, and that all mankind might visibly perceive that they needed his assistance, and longed for his return.’”

With all his resentments, I saw this did not displease Lord Rochfort, for, laughing at the comparison I had discovered, “Upon my word,” said he, “I cannot but compliment Lord Castleton upon his ambassador. I should only be glad if our foreign diplomacy were as well filled as our domestic. It would be hard now if such adroitness should fail, and I not think myself Camillus after all. But no ; as the Gaul is not at the gate, I will not be drawn out of this retreat, which seems now as strong a fortress against English envy, hatred and malice, lying and slandering, treachery and ingratitude, as it formerly was against Scotch rapine and moss-trooping insolence. It was this that made me prefer it to the silk and down of Beaulieu, which attracted many a rascal. In truth, I believe I was born too, perhaps three centuries too late ; for when I first arrived here, and traversed my vast and empty hall, and beheld my ancestor’s helmets, crowned with pennons waving in the wind, and read under them how many had been sheriffs of the county, how many had led their vassals to Scotland or Wales, how many to Aquitaine, I felt my heart dilate, and fear I despised myself for having been born in so changed a time. For, instead of belonging to a band of warriors (robbers though they might be), I felt I was now ma-

king one of a nation of pedlars, governed by a clique of men only fit to be gentlemen ushers; and paced the cold floor of the apartment which contained these monuments of former importance, with my disgust at the world increased a hundred-fold. I shivered, it is true, in a place where once whole trees flamed to illumine and warm its master and his men; but shivering one's self was better than warming crowds of the ungrateful, the designing, and the envious. Here said I,

'Feel I but the penalty of Adam,  
The difference of the seasons. As the icy fang  
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,  
Which when it bites and blows upon my body,  
E'en till I shrink with cold, I smile and say,  
These are no flatterers.'

He said this with an animation which shewed that, for the moment, at least, he was no counterfeit, adding, in the same tone, "Why should I leave it? My poor ancestor, Lord Northumberland, paid a severe penalty for doing so; but though one's head is safer in these times, we are blessed with the same struggles among statesmen, the same intrigues, and the same treachery. Look here," concluded he, pointing to Apemantus's inscription—

"'Rich men sin, and I eat root.'"

In this humour, I found it in vain to oppose him; for I had already discovered, in my commerce with the world, that opposition to a favourite, though perhaps but a temporary opinion, only gives it strength, and so I held my peace.

After a pause of some minutes, he resumed the talk.

"It was amusing," said he, "after my first arrival here, to observe the speculations which were hazarded as the cause of my retreat, by a set of blockheads, who knew nothing about me, or knaves, who were paid for abusing me. One said I had run out my fortune, and had come here to retrench; and there may be a worse cause assigned than that. (Here Lord Rochfort reddened a little, as if not liking to glance at such a thing.) Another did me the honour, at my years, to say that I was *eperdument epris* with a beautiful country girl, whom, from fear of rivals, I had immured with myself in this old castle, and never allowed her air or exercise, except upon

the battlements. A third asserted that I had offended the king, by turning my back upon him in the closet, because he would not make me prime minister; and the writer called upon all loyal subjects to support his Sacred Majesty in resenting this affront. This was in the Duke of E.'s paper; but I had ample revenge in his miserable mismanagement of his department, for which he is deservedly censured."

"Your lordship," observed I, "at least notes, and is interested with what is passing in the world, although so far retreated from it. May we not hope, then, that the time will come, when you may be willing to return to it?"

"Never," returned he, "while that world is what it is. My intention, as my wish, is to live and die here."

"Without companions! without interest! no pursuits! no amusements! How can that be, with your lordship's mind?"

"That very mind is your answer. As to companions, to one who has taken a true measure of the world, Belford, mean and inconsiderable as it is, and Berwick, immersed in trade and herrings, afford quite as much companionship (philosophically speaking) as London, though it holds its head so high. All are rogues; but these are honester rogues than you Londoners. A man cannot here so well smile, and smile, and be a villain; he lets you detect him at once. Besides, have I not the sea?—enough to satisfy any lover of change."

"I meant not to speak of the honesty of the natives," but their companionship: and where, among them, shall we find a companion for Lord Rochfort?"

"Very fine," said he, assuming an air almost stern; "but what right, young gentleman, have you to think you can cajole me with such gewgaw compliments? Look I as if I were still one of the fools of the world, snuffing incense from the rogues of it? or as if, in fact, I was still in the House of Lords? Observe this *roupe*: does it like a peer's robe? Observe these brogues; do they belong to a knight of the carpet? Handle this spade, it raised those roots (and he pointed through the window at the garden): does it give you reason to think I am one of the blind silk-worms you have left? No; I may be a worm; but a worm is an honest crawler of the earth, and not easily tempted from his hole by being told he is a beauty."

I own I felt abashed; for, with new habits and ideas, he

had either learned, or invented, a new language : one which certainly did not encourage an attempt at persuasion.

Shewing, perhaps, my sense of this, he added, with a sort of ironical laugh, " Come, I think I am more likely to convert you, than you me. What a triumph to philosophy, if the ambassador who came to tempt the hermit back again to court, to dainty dishes and silken sheen, should himself turn hermit,

' Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze.'

Oh ! it would be divine poetical justice ; like the prince robbing Falstaff—' Argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever.' *Allons,*" added he, still laughing most complacently at the thought, " here is a pen and ink ; sit down and write to Lord Castleton, one of my treatises *de contemptu mundi*. Tell him the delights and comforts, but above all, the independence, of a border castle. Tell him that, like Cicero, I count the waves on the shore, and think it gives better amusement than the waves he is forced to watch in town. Or say that, like Lælius and Scipio, I make ducks and drakes with pebbles—far better than making them with guineas, as I used to do. Acquaint him how much better you find it to dig one's own potatoes without an opposition at every stroke, than to keep awake one night for fear of being out-voted the next. Come, begin ; Pope shall supply you with the two first lines, and you will then go glibly on—

' Awake, my Castleton, leave meaner things  
To low ambition and the pride of kings.'

Here, still laughing at his own wit, he presented me with a pen and sheet of paper, and with mock earnestness desired me to commence.

I own I felt discomposed, if not displeased, but had too much command of myself to shew it. I, however, could not help saying, " I am glad to find that this exile has not deprived your lordship of your wit and merriment, though they are exhibited at the expense of friends who honour and love you. Lord Castleton does not so exercise his imagination, but laments your loss, and has never ceased to do so since

your retreat ; laments it, not more for his own sake, than that of the state."

"Which I am supposed unfit to direct," interrupted the marquess, loftily.

"Not by Lord Castleton," replied I, "nor by any means all whom, for the sake of the country, he feels forced to act with. But at least what he says ought to be well weighed, before your lordship dismisses me with such severe banter."

"And what says his sagacious lordship?" asked Lord Rochfort.

"Why, that to fly from the field where alone your powers can be shewn is not the way to prove their superiority, so as to make all men regret you as well as himself. If I may presume to add any thing of my own to this, I would ask leave to remind you of the maxim of statesmen and moralists, as well as lawyers, '*De non apparentibus, et non existentibus, eadem est ratio.*'"

"There may be something in that," said he, quickly, and he somewhat changed. Then, as if soliloquising, and at intervals, which I did not like to interrupt, he said, in a lower tone, "I believe Castleton loves me—is honourable and open—no tricks of backbiting—much respected by the king, though not perhaps first in favour—ought to be supported—yet ridiculous if —"

Here he made a full stop, which lasted so long that I could not help asking, "If what, my lord marquess? Surely such a word as ridiculous can never be applied to any thing Lord Rochfort could do which he felt to be right."

"I must do you the justice," said he, in reply, "to say I honour the temper you have shewn under taunts which I had no right to indulge, whatever my determination ; nor does Castleton deserve such a reception of his frank communication. I own, too, there is a great deal in what you last observed ; still it would be ridiculous in the eye of the world, and it would not be lost upon my ill-wishers, if, like a pouting boy or girl, I appeared to have fled away only to be brought back. This shall never be said—as it certainly would be if I returned, and the cabinet remained the same. As a sort of *mezzo termine*, however, and to shew that I wish well to Lord Castleton personally, I will give him my proxy, which, on taking leave of politics, as I intended, for ever, I declined to

do by anybody. And, in doing this, let me tell you I make a considerable advance ; nor would I do it if I did not entirely approve the measures he has communicated to me."

"O! my lord," said I, "pause not here ; do not a good thing by halves. Your superiority to the duke is so acknowledged, that you have but to appear, to reap the fruits of it. It is not impossible that he may consent to take a high court office, which, though it remove him from the government, will bring him nearer to the king. This will be more agreeable to both, and thus all parties will be satisfied."

"If I thought that," said Lord Rochfort—"but then, the ridicule——"

"And has Lord Rochfort," I exclaimed, "so little weight in the country—is he so little known in the world, or of so low a reputation, as to fear ridicule, which, even if attempted, he would shake off as a dew-drop from a lion's mane ? It is for little people to be afraid of ridicule."

"Upon my faith," replied the marquess, "I must repeat my felicitation to Lord Castleton upon having so good a second ; and but that it would spoil your's, to come to *me*, I could envy him his good fortune in having such a secretary."

I blushed at these words, not certainly altogether from modesty, for they kindled ambitious hopes, and some others, had been always so united in me, that the association, spite of all that had occurred, had not yet been severed.

At that instant the great trumpet at the gate sounded. "It is the post," said Lord Rochfort, looking at his watch.

The letters were brought in. One, signed Castleton, another on mourning paper. The marquess begged me to excuse him, and was leaving the room ; but I requested leave to visit the garden, which I had not seen, and left him to his letters, alone.

## CHAPTER XI.

OF THE EXTRAORDINARY AND IMPORTANT PROPOSAL THE MARQUESS MADE ME, AND MY HOPE OF OVERCOMING HIS SCRUPLES.

This strained passion doth you wrong, my lord ;  
Sweet earl, divorce not wisdom from your honour.

SHAKESPEARE.—2 *Henry IV.*

I AM absolutely astonished to find myself so near the end of my memoirs, though I am barely entering into my twenty-fifth year, and have had no particular adventures. Indeed, with the exceptions of being knocked on the head by a poacher, and advertised in the *Hue and Cry* as a house-breaker, I feel as if I had exhibited myself as the merest common-place person that ever attempted auto-biography.

And yet there may be some characters traced, some feelings developed, some question of consequence to our nature discussed, which may be thought interesting by those who can understand them. To those alone I write, and not to the thousand insects who look only to amuse themselves in the gilded sunbeams of the marvellous (whether in or out of nature), and who read more to avoid the trouble of thinking than to cultivate thought.

To return to my narration ; the garden at Belford Tower little deserves its name, at least according to our southern ideas. The culinary herbs absolutely necessary for a rough northern dinner of bannocks and kail were all of which it seemed ambitious. The notion that there were such things as flowers seemed never to have been entertained ; and, as it was spacious, stretching round three sides of the hill on which the castle stood, some large intervals between the beds were filled with oats, which were very flourishing.

The contrast between this and the Northamptonshire gardens, so praised by Mr. Simcoe, only proved still more the determined change of humour which his disgusts had effected in the mind of its possessor. A few stunted apple trees languished amid some yews ; which last, however, were

wide-spreading, and perhaps five hundred years old. These were, seemingly, the only signs that ornament or shelter had ever been thought of by the former owners of the castle.

One, and one only, interesting object presented itself, in what I took for the remains of a stone-quarry, but which had formerly been an oratory, half hid by two large yews, and constructed of rock and pebbles from the sea-shore. It was kept in tolerable preservation, for the sake, as I afterwards learned, of an inscription on a slate tablet, supposed to have been engraved for that Earl of Northumberland of whom, as having lost his head for the sake of Queen Mary and Popery, mention has been made already. It must have been composed just before he felt forced to leave this retreat for a still more dangerous one among the Scottish borderers, who betrayed him. It ran thus :

“ How long shall fortune fail me nowe,  
And harrowe me with fear and dreede ?  
How long shall I in vale abide,  
In misery my life to lead ?

“ To fall fra bliss, alas ! the while,  
It was my sair and heavye lott ;  
And I must leave my native land,  
And I must live a man forgot.”\*

While this engaged me, a proper pendant, I thought, for Apemantus's Grace (both of them seeming so apposite to the present condition and humour of the marquess), Mr. Simcoe brought his lord's compliments and request to see me, as he was afraid, with his gout, of the damp of the garden.

I found him still in the dining-room, which indeed, and his bed-chamber, were the only rooms in the castle fit for a Christian to live in, and only filled me with wonder that he should have remained in them so long (nearly seven months) without flinching.

He seemed in deep reflection when I came in, with both his letters open on the table.

“ I know not,” said he, “ whether these will assist your object of calling me back to the world, but they shew me (I do not thank them for it) that I have still some business in it

\* This is to be found in the ancient ballad, “ *Northumberland betrayed by Douglass*.—Percy, l. 220.



which I cannot neglect. Pray heaven it take me not away. In a word, Mr. Courtall, my member (*my* member, observe), who did not choose either to follow my lead or to vacate (no doubt for conscience' sake), is gone to get his reward. He is dead, and a new writ must be moved without delay. Lord Castleton presses me for a nomination ; which, little dreaming I should again care for it, I am not prepared to give. Yet if I don't, and immediately too, or perhaps go myself to oppose an opposition, I may lose this precious bubble, and then——"

Here he paused.

"I wait your lordship's meaning," said I.

"Why, then, my Lord Castleton, or my lord anybody, will not trouble themselves to send their secretaries after me—that is all."

I immediately combated this, by shewing him (in which I was most sincere) that the wish for him was personal, and not for his parliamentary interest ; which was proved by the fact that all his friends had supported the government, though he had retired.

"You are armed, I see, at all points," he observed, "and no time must be lost, for the post starts in two hours, and if I were to go up myself, which I could not if I would, and would not if I could, I should be too late, with this gout hanging about me.—Even this," continued he, "seems to have fallen out on purpose to vex me, for you see I cannot hold a pen."

On this, I ventured to say that if he would forgive the presumption, which I only entertained from his having promised me the honour of his confidence, I should be happy to take down his answer from his own dictation.

His answer astounded as well as affected me.

"You say well," said he, "and it will be convenient, and the less liable to objection ; because, as I must give a name, I know no one at this moment which I would sooner adopt than your own. The experience I have had of all others effectually prevents me from thinking of the hacks of the world. You at least seem virgin, and of your fitness this very visit leaves me without a doubt."

I was penetrated and overpowered ; knew not how to answer, still less what to decide. So many things to consider

—my own prospects—my situation with Lord Castleton—Lord Castleton himself.

“Come,” said the marquess, seeing me embarrassed, “decide, for, as I tell you, no time must be lost.”

“Of that I am aware,” returned I, “but your lordship must give me leave to collect my ideas, which are all scattered; first, by this most extraordinary mark of favour, for which I know not how to thank you; but next (to say nothing of my ignorance of my own fitness), the absolute necessity of knowing the sentiments of Lord Castleton, to whom I belong—more especially as your lordship has not signified your decision on his offers, nor in what light, politically, you regard his application. Ignorant of what answer I am to take back, will it be justifiable in me, who am in his service and devoted to his politics, to appear to have even listened to the proposal (however honourable and undeserved) of one who is at least not yet identified with him in his plan of action?”

“Fairly answered,” said he; “and only confirms the opinion I just now expressed, that you were virgin in the world. To relieve you, therefore (to say nothing of saving the post), you shall give your name only conditionally; and if Lord Castleton objects, you shall vacate. Not only this, but, if he approves and you remain permanently in, I absolve you from all obligation, which, as a man of honour, you might think yourself under, to follow my lead instead of Lord Castleton’s. Indeed, I begin to think I am scarcely parted from him in any of his views; and though my *personal* objections to unite with his government, in form, remain where they were, yet upon the particular measure he refers to me, I should have but one objection to make against it, besides the long journey, in my state of health, that would be necessary to enable me to support it.”

I felt myself leap for joy at the mere prospect of this, and eagerly asked what was his one objection?

“The fear of the world,” answered he; “not, as from your countenance you perhaps think, that it should reconcile me to it, but that I should hate it more. God knows I hate it enough, and retain such people as Parrot and Juniper, whom I see there, climbing the hill, merely to have something to laugh at, and keep me, by that semblance of cheerfulness, from turning an absolute savage. By the way, their visit is

extremely *mal à propos*, and I'll wager that fellow Parrot, who is as inquisitive and gossiping as a village barber, has heard you are here, and will never rest till he finds out why."

Here I thought it but just to my old acquaintance to inform his patron of my having met him at Alnwick, if only to account for his knowledge that I was here.

"*N'importe*," said the marquess; "he has no business to be here except by appointment; he has presumed, too, of late, more upon the necessity I have for him in business than I choose, and must have a rap of the knuckles."

"May I ask the character of his companion," said I, "whom he represented as so greatly inferior, that he said, nothing but your lordship's want of society could make you tolerate him?"

"He is an impudent hound," replied Lord Rochfort, "for, of the two, Juniper is far the superior in real sense, though coarse and abrupt in manner, more especially towards the lawyer himself, and at the very moment when he thinks he has most shewn his superiority. It diverts me to set one against the other; and would now, but that we are better employed. Both are vulgar—both parasites; Parrot tries to disguise—Juniper does not conceal it; Parrot thinks himself a gentleman—Juniper knows he is but a gauger. But to return to our subject, I own that one objection I have to the world is the fear I have of hating it more even than I do."

"Fear not, my lord," I replied; for I will venture to affirm that these thoughts are not really deserved. The court, I allow, has treated you ill, but you are too good to visit the sins of the court on the world at large. Return to it, and it will do you justice."

"Let us first see what Don Castleton will say to our letters," replied he, "which you must now lose no time in writing."

This was true; so at his dictation I wrote with hurried feelings a paragraph on myself, as the ground of his wish for me to succeed Mr. Courtall; and a long letter of my own, being a sort of journal of all that had occurred since I had been at the castle, and in particular the whole of my conversation with the marquess, in all its bearings, on the subject of his return.

Long before I had done, the auxiliaries, Parrot and Juni-

per, had applied to the gate trumpet for admittance, and were told by a message, in no very measured terms, through Simcoe, to employ themselves in the garden till my lord had finished the business he was upon.

Juniper obeyed by reposing himself in Simcoe's room; Parrot, disdaining such abasement, demanded the last newspaper, with which he amused himself on the parapet of the castle wall overlooking the German Sea.

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## CHAPTER XII.

OF THE STRANGE COMPANIONS THE MARQUESS HAD CHOSEN IN HIS RETIREMENT, AND THE THRALDOM OF SUPERIORS WHO HAVE INTRUSTED SECRETS TO INFERIORS.

Because that I familiarly, sometimes,  
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,  
Your sauciness will jest upon my love,  
And make a common of my serious hours.  
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,  
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Comedy of Errors*.

ON the admission of the illustrious associates, so important to his happiness, that, as Parrot had told me, Lord Rochfort could not do without them, I was curious (especially after what the marquess had said of them) to mark their reception.

My fellow-student exhibited himself very frankly as the *enfant de famille* of the place—rather, perhaps, I might say, the major-domo, prime minister, confidant, and groom of the chambers; in one word—factotum.

The consciousness of this made him but ill bear the dishonoring stigma conveyed to him through Simcoe, in the prohibition to enter till his chief sent for him. This I could see had affected him not a little when he joined us, to which I also saw that my presence had not a little contributed.

Our equality at Queen's would not allow him to brook what

he held to be an indignity, which he seemed resolved to make up for by a more than usual familiarity as to the ways and routine of the castle, and in his behavior to the lord of it.

To this the shrewd gauger was a most marked contrast. Like Sir Pertinax, he seemed not able to stand upright in the presence of the great man, but bowed at every word and every look; and "my lord marquess," and "your lordship," was never off his tongue. The tyranny, however, with which the lawyer pretended to treat him, sharpened by the reception he had met with when he most wished to shine, was evidently resented by the gauger, who seemed only lying by for an opportunity to revenge himself. He chuckled, therefore, at the marquess's answer to Parrot's first address to him.

That glib gentleman, assuming an ease and familiarity which surprised me the more because it was clearly by no means pleasing to the noble lord he addressed, accosted him thus:—

"Having heard Mr. Clifford was here, and knowing how out of humor you are with unexpected intruders, I thought you might want a little assistance in receiving him, so Juniper and I came up——"

"To restore my good humor, I suppose," said Lord Rochfort, drily. "Upon my word, I am infinitely obliged by your protection of me."

"There now," said the gauger, "I telled you how it would be; yon see my lord marquess did not want none of your help, and would rather have your room nor your company, especially as he have got a real gentleman with him on business."

"Real gentleman! you booby," replied Parrot; "why, I thought, on account of that very gentleman, I might be of the more use, because Mr. Clifford and I were fellow-students at Oxford; and it's always pleasant to break formality by the mutual knowledge people have of one another's history and habits, to say nothing of old stories, jokes, and witticisms."

"Of the value of which," said Lord Rochfort, still more drily, "from the brilliant specimens I have long had of them, and particularly at this moment, it is impossible to doubt."

At this the gauger, who at least had wit enough to see when wit could or could not be endured, seeing Parrot about to reply, pulled him by the coat skirts, and in a not low whis-

per said, "Coom, Parrot, doanty be so fond of talking, and showing thy parts; dost not see his lordship be busy, and don't want us this morning? I telled thee so, but thee would not believe me. Coom, let us make our boo, and be gang-ing."

"Why, the business between Mr. Clifford and me," observed the marquess, "is certainly sufficiently interesting to require no addition from the wit of a Belford attorney. I am sorry, therefore (though ineffably grateful), for the trouble you have taken to assist my inexperience in receiving company."

"I am sure your lordship knows," replied Parrot, somewhat, but not much, abashed, "that I can never think it trouble to be of use to my friends."

"I am sure of it," returned the marquess, in the same dry tone; "for I am, and always shall be, ready to confess, that even without a fee, 'if you were as tedious as a king, you could find it in your heart to bestow it all on my lordship.'"

"By dad, you had it there," said Juniper, giggling, and bowing to the lord of the castle, who could not help laughing outright, in which I could as little help joining.

"I beg pardon," at last said the lawyer; "I only thought, hearing that Mr. Clifford had come upon business, that, as your lordship's attorney, I might be wanted; so here I am."

"I thank you most profoundly," returned the marquess; "and yet think I could be well content 'to be my own attorney in this case.'"

"Ah! now I see you are at your quotations again," replied Parrot, "and you know I never can stand you there."

"Nor anywhere else," interrupted the gauger, "for all that you may think."

"My lord does not want you for a second," said Parrot, peevishly.

"Not against *thee*, certainly," replied Juniper.

"His lordship knows how to distinguish between us," rejoined the attorney, with an air of contempt; "and, at any rate, is sure of my readiness, on all occasions, to take his commands."

"No doubt; no doubt; and charge them afterwards in your bill," said the gauger—"He! He!"

Lord Rochfort, though amused almost to laughing at these hits of the gauger, thought it necessary to come to the assist-

ance of the man of law, against the man of gin, though he did not much relieve him when he observed,

"My good Parrot, you are the most obliging of talking birds."

At which Juniper giggled aloud, and, bowing again and again to the marquess, exclaimed,

"Now that's so good of your lordship. Yes; certainly a Parrot be a talking bird."

Parrot, though furious with his companion, became *almost* disconcerted, and again said he only came in his capacity of attorney, in which, he added significantly, and as I thought, maliciously, "Your lordship has at least found me useful at Newcastle, where you sent me three days ago, and whence I only returned last night, with the answers from Messieurs Surtees—which, by the way, I ought to have reported at first—that they (here he affected to whisper Lord Rochfort) could not honour any more of your——"

"Impertinent blockhead," cried the marquess, in a sudden rage, and stopping him; "is this impudence possible? You say you are my attorney—you are much fitter to be the town crier. I dismiss you from my service and concerns. Go, and return no more."

"As you please, my lord," replied the lawyer, who felt that he had the best house in Belford, and nobody to compete with him—"as you please," said he, summoning up his courage, which had been a little disconcerted at my presence, "and when I send in my bill, I hope——"

"Impudent cur, depart this instant," cried the marquess, in a fit of passion which I did not think could belong to him.

"I telled you how it would be," said the gauger, softly changing his tones as they both left the room.

"Is not this intolerable?" exclaimed Lord Rochfort, when they were gone. "To be bearded by such a reptile, an idiot, unworthy to be trusted, though in a profession requiring all trust. His insolence, I fear has made me forget myself. I have to beg your pardon and my own. But you know not, Mr. De Clifford, the curse it is to be forced to rely on such base minds, whether as confidants in business, or companions. How have I been mistaken in supposing they would amuse my retirement! No; I retract all I have said of the merits of my associates, and the preference I persuaded myself to

shew them. It has almost tempted me to return with you to the world, and even to court it, though I have called myself *le courtisan detrompe du monde*."

I hailed this confession as a good augury of success for my mission, and told him so; adding my astonishment at the companions he had condescended to adopt in exchange for those he had repudiated, who, if not more honest or less selfish, had at least better manners.

"The sauciness, mixed with submission, of Juniper did not," said I, "surprise me; but I own I was shocked at the familiarity you permitted in that forward and conceited *fellow-student* of mine."

"I have confessed," said Lord Rochfort, "that it was my own fault; nor shall it occur again. Yet what am I to do? I have neglected every one in the shape of a gentleman who has called upon me in this Siberia, meaning to put up, and indeed to identify myself, with the natives. But I begin to believe, though I scarcely own it to myself, that I am not made for Kamtschatka."

"Your lordship is made only for the world," answered I, "and ought immediately to return to it, if only to shake off the impertinence of such a troublesome coxcomb as Parrot, to say nothing of his unworthiness as to trust."

"You say true," answered the marquess, "and I will think of it."

He then fell into a fit of musing, which, not being convenient to indulge in company, he withdrew to his chamber above stairs, which I heard him pacing for at least a quarter of an hour, when I suppose he sat down, as it ceased.

It was something gained to have induced him even to think of abandoning his retreat; though I was forced to confess that what Lord Castleton's proposals, backed by my fine arguments, could not effectually produce, was likely to be accomplished by a piece of impertinence from a pragmatistical coxcomb whom he despised. In this he reminded me of a trait in the life of Lord Buckhurst, first Earl of Dorset, who, being idle and extravagant, and forced to borrow money of a scrivener, was so disgusted and indignant at being kept by him waiting too long before he would see him, that he resolved to get rid of that thralldom by taking to business, which



he did so effectually, that, being very able, he succeeded Burleigh as lord treasurer to Queen Elizabeth.

I longed, but dared not, to bring this anecdote before Lord Rochfort. He, however, seemed to follow Lord Buckhurst's example without knowing the story.

"This fellow," said he, upon rejoining me, "presumes to be offensive, on the strength of knowing some of my affairs, and my having employed him in pecuniary negotiations. But of all dependencies, deliver me from that of being in the power of vulgar minds, who think they have a secret which you wish to conceal. The scoundrel shall be disappointed, for I will myself discover it. I will allow the world to know, if it pleases, that I am embarrassed. If nothing else, my seclusion in this old tower, and this frugal life, have taught me that gold is not necessary for happiness, as gold itself had shewed me before that it could not command success in our wishes. Could I therefore with this spade discover a hidden treasure, like the real Timon whom Castleton says I imitate, I would say with him,

'Come, damned earth,  
Thou common whore of mankind, that putt'st odds  
Among the rout of nations, I will make thee  
Do thy right nature.'

In fact, I would bury it again, for fear it should tempt me again to rebel against its true uses."

For this I honoured him, and ventured to set before him how much better it was to employ his talents in serving the state, even though every thing might not go according to his wishes, than abandoning the world, as he had done, to be affronted by such a coxcomb as Parrot.

As I was apologizing for this liberty, which I really felt to be too great, he stopped me, and, with much kindness of manner, told me he was only the more obliged to me.

"No," said he; "having recovered my senses, such a representation ought to be the reverse of offensive, from you, however lowering the behaviour of the fool who has left us. But I really beg for time to look about me, for I feel I have a number of crude notions that want setting in order. Do me the favour, therefore, to leave me to myself till dinner-time, and meanwhile Simcoe shall shew you the way to the sea-

shore, where the waves will afford you room for meditation, with your mind, by no means unproductive. Till then, adieu."

At this, delivering me over to the attentions of Simcoe, whom he summoned by a bell which generally stood on the table; I left him, under the charge of that civil domestic, hoping on my return to find his reflections had turned to profit.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

GREAT THINGS FROM SMALL CAUSES.—THE EFFECTS OF VULGAR IMPERTINENCE ON A HIGH MIND.—THE MARQUESS YIELDS TO PERSUASION, OF WHICH I REAP THE BENEFIT.—I RETURN TO LONDON, WHERE, WITH MORE AND MORE PROSPECT OF ADVANCEMENT, I AM ONLY MORE DESPONDING ON THE SUBJECT OF BERTHA.

What your wisdom could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light.  
SHAKESPEARE.—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.  
*As You Like It.*

AFTER we had passed the sort of esplanade that lies before Belford Tower, I began to explore, under the guidance of the faithful Simcoe, a winding path, changing often into steps cut in the rock, leading to the sea.

During the descent, it was evident that my guide paused at particular turnings, in the hope of gaining information respecting the recent interview between his lord and the worthies who had just made their exit. "I never knew my lord so loud in all his life," said Mr. Simcoe.

Finding this produced no comment, at another resting-place, he said he feared that something very queer had happened; for Mr. Juniper had pressed his hand, much affected, and said, "'I am afraid, Mr. Simcoe, I shall never drink a glass of your warm punch in your warm room again.' Something

extraordinary must have happened," continued the butler, "for this to be; but provided it takes my lord to town, or even only to Beaulieu, I shall not care. May I be so bold, Sir, as to ask what has happened? for lawyer Parrot seemed on excessive high ropes, and swore that my lord would repent the affront he had put upon him the longest day he had to live. If not too free, Sir, may I take the liberty of asking what was the affront? for though I have known my lord, once or twice in the course of his life, knock a man down when in a passion, I never knew him affront any person whatever."

"His lordship," said I, "certainly did not give this proof to Mr. Parrot of abstaining from affronting him; but he dismissed him from his service, not more gently than he deserved."

"I dare say," returned the butler; "for though Mr. Parrot carries himself civil enough towards us, I have known him very peart in speaking of and to his shooperiors, which I tell him is always wrong, especially as he lives by them. In this case, too, if he has talked to my lord's face what he has sometimes said of him behind his back, he deserves hanging; for my lord, though not so rich as he was, is still as generous as a prince. More's the pity; as, far from thanking him, such people as Parrot, while they pocket his money, say it is all to shew off as it were, and make the world think he is not ruined, when he is; God forbid! I suppose, however, from what has passed, we shall never see Mr. Parrot again."

"I suppose so," replied I; and having by this time reached the strand, on which a fine rough flood tide was foaming in billows, I allowed Mr. Simcoe to climb home again, meditating on his way the important news I had communicated to him, while the sea roared me into a sort of solemnity of thought.

For my own part, though there was nothing but what was perfectly respectful to his master in what Simcoe had said, I did not approve his allowing himself to talk of him as he did to me, a comparative stranger; and, from the conduct of the vulgar Parrot, which made me recollect the maxim of that accomplished woman, Lady Hungerford, that all vulgarity had something selfish in it, I made a resolution for my future guidance, never to put myself in the power of an inferior,

whether in station or mind, or trust him with any thing I wished not to have published to the world.

These thoughts and some others, which seldom left me, occupied my solitary walk on the solitary strand that led to Belford. The others may be guessed; for I had counted upon receiving that morning, in a letter from Granville (which never came), an answer to mine, from York, requesting information on the mysterious visit by Prince Adolphus to Foljambe Park.

All thought, however, was at length lost in the contemplation of the magnificent billows, white with foam, and thundering as they approached nearer and nearer, devouring, as it were, the strand on which I stood, and covering me at times with their spray. They seemed the stupendous majesty of nature (for it had begun almost to blow a storm), and engaged me till the sound of the great bell of the castle, floating upon the wind, told me the hour of dinner was near. This, in conformity with Lord Rochfort's new habits, was three o'clock; and I made haste to rejoin him, not a little anxious to know the result of his self-examination. As the dinner was, however, going on the table, this could not be till that repast was concluded; which, being little like the London banquets where I had formerly met him, did not take long.

Though we sat in full view of Apemantus's Grace, our dinner was by no means confined to roots, as Apemantus recommended. The fisheries on the coast supplied the freshest herrings; Berwick sent exquisite kipper;\* and the moors, which looked so bleak and dreary, besides well-flavoured mutton, gave us excellent and savoury wild fowl. The cellars also in Grosvenor Square had not been permitted to retain the whole of their treasures.

When I complimented my noble host upon all this, he said, "Though I fled from man, I did not think myself bound to fly from what was meant for the use of man. This is a part of the philosophy of retirement which I neither did, nor wished to understand; and though I admired and approved Apemantus's Grace, it was always with the exception of the intimation, 'I eat root.' Indeed, so little was I a convert to that part of it, that, to the shame of all hermits be it spoken,

\* Dried salmon.

I endeavoured to seduce my French cook, Monsieur Dumain, to stay with me here ; but after surveying the place, and bestowing many *sacristies* upon it, he demanded his *conge*, though I offered to raise his wages. I was glad of it ; for my seclusion, and dinners like this, soon taught me that a French cook, that requisite of fashion, was, like fashion itself, only another humbug among the many that deceive the world."

"But, now," said his lordship, after a slight pause—"now for your mission. I have taken my resolution upon it, though a little ashamed of the main reason that has led to it. In a word, I do not like to think that an alarm to my pride, and a disgust at impertinence, have effected more in removing, if not my prejudices themselves, at least their consequences, than sober reason. This morning I had resolved only to send my proxy to Lord Castleton, and to remain here myself. I now see that to remain here, with the jackanapes I have dismissed for a companion (to say nothing of the danger of confiding in him as a law adviser), is impossible ; and as there is no alternative, I am ready to return to town. To do so, shorn of my beams as I must be, has, I own, been my stumbling-block ; but the real philosophy which my solitude, by making me better acquainted with myself, has generated, has overcome that. I think with you, that a peer, not yet in the decline of his age, has no right to renounce his duty by retiring, especially if he retire in a pet, which perhaps I did. The worst is, that, in all probability, it is a pet that sends me back again : but thus are we governed ; such is human nature : it was a pet, you know, that enabled Troy to hold out so many years ; it was a pet that produced the *Iliad*."

"Pet, or sober reflection," replied I, overjoyed, "I hail the decision as the best thing that could happen for the country ; and I am sure Lord Castleton will, as far as he is concerned, give you *carte blanche*."

"Hold," said he ; "not a word of that. It will spoil all the grace of the thing, if there can be any thing of grace in only doing what we think is right. I approve of Lord Castleton's measures, and I will support them because I approve ; but I will not be paid for it. I am not paid by the nation for doing its business in the House of Lords ; I will not be paid by Lord Castleton for there doing the business of the nation.

There is a still stronger reason. It cannot be concealed that my fortune is hurt. If it was not by others, it would be revealed by the officious blockhead I have dismissed. It shall never be said that I took office to retrieve my affairs. Tell this to Castleton, who, I know, will understand my conduct, though no one else may."

I was really so overcome with this noble frankness, this generosity of spirit, that it was some time before I could reply.

It is unnecessary to relate the consequent steps taken before I left the castle. I will only add upon the subject, that the marquess acted up to his professions; realizing all expectations; and, from his persevering disinterestedness, depriving even party calumny of a pretext to impute a sordid motive to him. Sourkrout attempted it by putting the world upon their guard, exclaiming weekly, "We shall see, we shall see"—"the mare's nest will be found out"—"old birds not to be caught with chaff"—"all is not gold that glitters;"—and other like elegant phrases, all denoting the chaste and delicate style of this champion of liberty and regulator of the public taste.

But, unhappily, he was disappointed, for the marquess continued a powerful support to the government, without office; which so enraged the patriotic and virtuous editor, that he hinted pretty broadly, that he had good reason to believe the marquess enjoyed in secret a very considerable pension, either out of the secret service or the privy purse.

It may be supposed that I wrote a precise detail of all my operations at Belford Tower to Lord Castleton; and the whole scene of that romantic place, the varied interests it presented in viewing the turns of Lord Rochfort's vehement but noble character, together with its crowning event, made my visit to it the most pleasing as well as exciting occurrence of my public life.

To return to my narrative: I was gratified before I left Northumberland, by the most unqualified approbation of all my proceedings, accompanied with a prospect held out to me which would have left little in the way of fortune to desire. For as yet I had been only private secretary to my patron; but the death of Mr. Mansfield, the chief secretary, having made a vacancy not only in that office, but a considerable

sinecure in the colonies, Lord Castleton told me at once, that I might depend upon the nomination to both.

As this, however, was evidently the effect of having over-valued my service in respect to Lord Rochfort, with more scrupulous feelings than many old stagers would have thought prudent, I sat down to explain to Lord Castleton, that I owed my success more to accident than ability. I therefore related to him the whole history of the effect of Parrot's insolence upon that nobleman, as greatly aiding, if not solely procuring the result which ensued.

Lord Castleton, with all the liberality that marked him, wrote me for answer that my self-denial only enhanced, not only my service, but his wish to reward it; he had therefore ordered the patents to be made out against my return.

Behold me then, henceforward, not only with more power, but with an immense increase of income, half of it for life.

The first of the joyful impressions which this made upon me was, that it brought me somewhat, though but a little, nearer that fascinating dream, which still haunted me, spite of fate. But this was like a momentary gleam of sunshine in winter; for besides that any good fortune of mine could only bring our *situations*, not our *hearts*, nearer together (being wholly ignorant of her feelings towards me, even if she were free), I had been told, on authority, that if I had acquired the whole estate of Bardolfe castle, peerage and all, never could I pretend to her whom I now thought the *be-trothed* Bertha.

This was only confirmed by the continued silence of Granville, in regard to my letter from York.

The tidings of my prosperity, however, I communicated to my benefactors, Fothergill and Manners, and the good family at Bardolfe, to whom it occasioned wonder as well as pleasure, for none of them could fancy, much less believe, that "t' young doctor," when he set out on a journey on foot, could have been destined to such good fortune as a place for life, and a seat in Parliament. One unlooked-for satisfaction was added to it, that it made my good, quiet, and retiring father hold his head up higher than was his wont at the grand jury at York; but this *par parenthese*.

On arriving in town, I wanted much to make me completely happy. I found myself involved in the novel business

of an election ; for Lord Castleton had gladly fallen in with Lord Rochfort's proposal, that I should stand on his interest for the borough of Winterton ; and so close had the time run, that I had scarcely an hour to give a farther account of my mission to my chief. However, the feared opposition not taking place, eight and forty hours sufficed to class me among the Commons of England ; for in those days the interference of a peer in an election was not very scrupulously inquired into. And yet, as I never gave a vote which I would not have given had I been elected by a hundred thousand voices, and supported the measures I did, because I approved them, I have seen nothing in the virtuous, and uncorrupt incorruptible times since (in which the *purest* reform has prevented their return of any but the *purest* patriots), to make me feel that I did not love my country and act for its interests as honestly as they.

The benefit, however, which the state has received by this most virtuous change, from the universal corruption, folly, and turbulence of former times, to the universal wisdom, honesty, and unanimity of the present, is too clear to stop the current of these memoirs in order to prove it. But this also *par parenthese*.

I had now attained to the summit of the ambition of many a man beyond me in age—office, revenue, and the honours of Parliament ; yet the events passing at Foljambe Park still occupied my principal interest. Granville had never noticed my urgent letter ; my first enquiry, therefore, was after him ; my next, Lady Hungerford. In regard to the first, I was more than ever anxious to see him, from his neglect (unkind, as I thought it) of my urgent request for information respecting the report of Bertha's marriage. It was now ten days since I wrote to him so urgently on the the subject, from the coffee-room at York.

To my concern, though not my wonder, I found that both Granville and Lady Hungerford were gone to Foljambe Park ; he, almost immediately after I left town, and Lady Hungerford, only the day before I returned.

My heart sank as Lord Castleton told me this. Alas ! thought I, they have gone to attend the nuptials of the young princess ; he as counsellor to the family and near kinsman, she as the dearest friend of the bride.



Resolved to heroism, as I thought myself, I own the news shocked me. I grew pale and sick, and I thought Lord Castleton eyed me with peculiar curiosity ; but I should have been equally affected had a porter in the streets regarded me with earnestness, on the principle of a guilty conscience.

My anxiety threw me off my guard, and I fear Lord Castleton discovered me. For I could not help saying, though my voice faltered, "I suppose they have gone to attend the wedding."

"What wedding?" asked Lord Castleton; "I heard of none. They mentioned none to me."

"Not of Miss Hastings, said I, "with Prince Adolphus of Saxony, her cousin? I suppose, as a minister, you saw him in town some days ago?"

"No; he passed through, without being presented."

"Aye, on the wings of love," observed I. "No wonder;" and I faltered more and more.

"You speak like what you are," said Lord Castleton, good-humoredly, "a warm young man. Prince Adolphus, I am informed, is Mr. Hastings' nephew, but I have heard of no nuptials."

"And yet the account must be true."

"What account?"

"That in the *World* newspaper, that he was engaged to his cousin, and had therefore proceeded to Yorkshire without stopping."

"'Tis strange, if this be so," said Lord Castleton, "and Granville or Lady Hungerford knew it, that neither of them should have mentioned it."

"It might be a secret," returned I, "and they the confidants of it."

"You have at least settled it in your own mind," returned the earl, "and the prince must be lucky, for he is as poor as Job, and the lady, Honora tells me, is rich, and not only eminently beautiful, but still more lovely in character."

"Lady Hungerford," answered I, "is seldom deceived in her judgment of her friends."

"The more happy for you," replied my patron, smiling.

Here the conversation ended, and, after a few business topics I was allowed to seek repose, if I could, in the solitude of my lodgings. When there, I turned the matter a

thousand ways in my mind. That the marriage was about to take place, every thing conspired to prove. Public report uncontradicted—the visit of the two the most likely to attend it, not only from connection and friendship, but as having been long the trusted depositories of the secret ;—for of this I had no doubt. Why, however, it should have been a secret at all, or Lord Castleton not apprized of it when it was to be one no longer, weighed a little, though but a little, on the other side.

No ; I had no consolation ; though if I had had it as to the instant marriage, what it would ultimately have availed me was a question I did not fail to ask myself. Still I wished it determined ; and would rather have been even present at the ceremony, than be torn to pieces as I was by the anxieties of suspense. The next morning, therefore, and two or three after that, I ransacked every newspaper for the expected intelligence, and even made a daily journey to a city coffee-house, where I had been told the York county papers were taken, to satisfy my curiosity.

Lord Castleton wondered at my unusual eagerness about his post, and my impatience till all his packets were opened ; particularly when he discovered, as he soon did, that this great interest was all occasioned by an expectation of his hearing from Lady Hungerford. My own disappointment as to Granville, to my annoyance, remained, nor did I like to intrude upon him again ; in short, my uneasiness grew unbearable, as is always the case with protracted suspense.

At last the well-watched knock of the postman produced a letter in Granville's hand, and the Ferry-bridge post-mark. Its contents were remarkable.

"I did not answer you immediately," said he, "for I myself, though here, was too little informed to resolve your question ; nor would I write now, but that I know you to be so sensitive a gentleman, that I shall have a quarrel *à l'outrance* on my hands if I do not say something. What to say is the question, for what can I say, when I know nothing correctly ?

Surmises I could give in plenty, but could not answer for their truth. I may tell you, however, that there are no preparations for a wedding, nor do I know if any are in contemplation. Meantime, what is certain is, the severe illness of Mr. Hastings, who is confined to his bed, which is anxiously

attended both by the prince and Bertha. You did not judge ill of the handsome Adolphus when you pronounced him so fine a fellow. (This gave me a severe pang.)

"As to engagements, I have certainly heard of them (and I will no longer conceal from you, on sufficient authority); but how they got into the papers, except by dealing with the devil (which I believe all editors do), I don't know. Yet there is no outward indication of one *at present*; though there is certainly great intimacy between the cousins, for Bertha does not refuse herself to his attentions; and, on his part, his respect for her seems always so profound in her presence, as to prevent his showing his agreeable qualities; for, out of it, he is really excellent company.

"This is all I know. If any one knows more, it is Lady Hungerford, to whom, before she arrived here, there had been frequent letters from the supposed princess elect.

"Let me not conclude without felicitating you on the accession you have made both to your reputation, station, and fortune. A seat in Parliament, and two thousand a-year, half of it by patent for life, make you a *bon parti* for any damsel, however high. Never forget therefore, what I long ago told you, that there is more than one Bertha in the world."

"When I do," said I, as I finished reading, "may my right hand forget her cunning." And will it be believed, that what Granville thus threw out respecting a *bon parti* actually made me direct my thoughts towards this forbidden land, with a sort of elevation, spite of all caution to the contrary, and spite even of the present situation of affairs. Oh, youth! youth! delightful with hope, and irrepressible by fear!—what is not thy value?

Notwithstanding all this, I was obliged to come to a sober examination of the case. Whatever might be the situation as to engagement, previous to the handsome foreigner's arrival, it was clear that they must have now come to mutual understanding, for Bertha "*did not refuse herself to his attentions*," and in her presence his respect for her was so profound as to check his natural spirits. What greater proof could I have?

I would have given my new appointment to have been allowed to consult Lady Hungerford, whose gloomy assurance (never forgotten), that if I was even Lord Bardolfe, or Lord

Clifford himself, I could not succeed, was now remembered in greater force than ever. I was too vain, perhaps, in thinking that I had some place in Bertha's regard, and would not believe that the impossibility denounced was personal. It therefore could only be occasioned by this engagement; the existence of which was now actually not denied by Granville, though he hung a cloud over, at the same time that he revealed it. How much better, therefore, for me if she were actually married; for, while she was single, it seemed too clearly proved that I was incurable. Granville's allusion to a *bon parti* did not make the contrary more likely.

On the other hand, the announcement of Mr. Hastings' illness was the cause of much speculation. If he died (and how tottering had been his health), what more reasonable, more wise, or more likely, than that his daughter should seek protection from one of her nearest relatives, who could give her the highest rank and dignity, while she, a great heiress, enriched him with the wealth he wanted to support them?

Oh! thought I, that Fothergill or Manners were here to guide me, for how little am I able to guide myself!

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### OF THE CHANGE IN LORD ROCHFORD ON HIS RETURN TO THE WORLD.

The Gods are witness,  
Ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief  
For his undone lord' than mine eyes for you.  
SHAKESPEARE.—*Timon of Athens*.

Happy is your grace,  
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune  
Into so quiet and so sweet a stile.

*As You Like It.*

I RESUME my account of the Marquess of Rochfort. I trust the reader is as interested as I was myself to observe what would be his conduct on returning to the world. He was no common-place character, and wherever he was would exhibit a life of his own.

His return was hailed by his political friends, of course, but also by all others, many of whom thought the comparison which had been made of him to Timon would still hold—that he had discovered gold in the recesses of his northern castle, and that they might expect a renewal of that prodigality by which they had so often benefited.

They were disappointed. He gave the closest attention to business in the House of Peers, where he often spoke with effect, to the great advantage of his friends in the ministry; but he no longer kept an open house, or laid himself out for popular applause. To imitate Chatham, and force the closet by riding into it on the shoulders of the people, was given up as chimerical; yet to gain it by the ordinary methods of obsequious homage was disdained as much as ever; and, feeling indignant at what he thought the ill-usage of former friends and followers, he fell back upon himself, shining in public business, but maintaining a dignified reserve in his private demeanour which nothing broke in upon. His acquaintance, therefore, far from that indiscriminate concourse which had administered formerly to his pride, and to expectations which had been frustrated by what he thought and called treachery, were now contracted to a few—the very few whom, though men of the world, he considered honest.

At the head of these was Lord Castleton, who with Granville, and sometimes myself, seemed the companions he preferred. I know not whether he was happy, but he was certainly less ascetic, and he was at least true to the disinterested resolution he had taken of declining office, lest his motives for returning should be suspected;—for his rival, the duke, having retired from the cabinet, and his place being offered him, he declined it, though his fortune was at nurse and his means much required it.

The cool, discriminating judgment of his friend Lord Castleton, remonstrated against this, as an unnecessary and undeserved sacrifice of himself to public prejudice, which he ought to be above; and Lord Castleton was right. Yet if health and evident ease of mind, apparent in his looks, his manners, and his conversation, all indicating peace with himself, were the result of this determination, I cannot think that Lord Rochfort was wrong.

The observing Mr. Simcoe was so struck with the altera-

tion, that for some time after their return from their rough abode in the north he always accosted me when I visited the marquess, with a "Lord, Sir, what a blessing it was when you found us out at that queer old tower. My lord seems his own man again. Indeed (though he does not give so many dinners, and I have much less to do here than at Belford), he's a better man than ever he was."

For my own part, I rejoiced almost as much as Mr. Simcoe himself, for I could not help loving the marquess for his affability to *me*, perhaps the more for his sternness to everybody else. At first, therefore, I was grieved to see him shut up in a house, once the favourite abode of gaiety and magnificence, now converted into a solitude, and himself the hermit of it.

The motive, however (summed up in his love of independence), for withdrawing himself from his former companions (I mean not his followers, whom he now detested for their ingratitude, but), his equals, gilded his retreat, and his manner of carrying it into effect displayed all the vehement character that belonged to him.

I learnt much of this from his solicitor, Mr. Fountain, with whom I was thrown into a sort of intimacy by the election at Winterton, at which place, as indeed everywhere else, save and except the northern regions, which were so happily administered by the illustrious Parrot, he was an active, skilful agent, or rather I may say a confidential friend. This gentleman, the opposite to Parrot in every thing, whether as to professional knowledge, or the extraordinary common sense, cool judgment, and even temper which distinguished him, wound up all his character with, or rather founded it upon, a warmth and simplicity of heart, and a disinterestedness as to self, which made him the wonder as well as the honour of his profession. So much so, that he alone would balance *all* the adverse opinions which the examples of too many unworthy members of that profession have created in regard to them as a whole; and I may safely say, after coursing through almost every division of society, that, if he was not *more* just than all others, he was

"E'en *as* just a man  
As e'er my conversation cop'd with all."

Happy indeed was Lord Rochfort, (as happy indeed is

every one) who, in an adviser always at his side, possesses one who unites the clearest professional skill, with the most disinterested attachment of a friend. Such was Mr. Fountain who had done all he could to keep the marquess in the right path, and was as grieved as Flaminius himself,\* when he saw his reckless advance to ruin. For he was perfectly alive to his high qualities, and esteemed and loved the better parts of his character, particularly, he said, his contempt for the rascals who had profited by his eccentricities to undo him.

Hence there was always open war between Fountain and the usurers, whose scandalous arts, roguery, and impudence combined, he always did his utmost to expose and defeat; and though he could not induce Lord Rochfort to do himself common justice by them, and his refusal to do so cost him thousands, yet he could not help admiring the motives which prompted the sacrifice.

"For though they had undone him," said Mr. Fountain to me, "I observed that to think of their power over him gave him far more disgust and self-reproach than the loss of all the money out of which they had cheated him. I was with the marquess one day," he added, "when Scrape, the scrivener, 'an exceeding knave,' who had often raised money for him, brought in his account, amounting to £20,000. Would you believe that of this sum, what reached the marquess's pocket was £5,000? Shocked at this, he remonstrated. The fellow, who had been always meanly reverential till he got him into his net, grew saucy, and, far from relaxing, defied him. For he had bound him by special securities, and coolly now told him if he chose law, he might go into court if he pleased. Lord Rochfort felt the disgrace of this in his very soul; and though I interposed," said Fountain, "and told him that Chancery would relieve him from an imposition of 400 per cent., 'No,' said he, 'the scoundrel knows his advantage; he knows that his name stinks so, that I shrink from mine being associated with it, even to save £10,000. No; I dare not go to law with him, though I should succeed: let the beast be paid; but do you hear, Sir, get you out of the room as fast as you can, lest you be kicked down stairs.' Lord Rochfort," proceeded Fountain, "broke up the remaining part of his establishment in con-

\* Steward of Timon.

sequence, and continues the recluse he is, till the money is retrieved."

I found that the marquiss had now done so some months, and would be obliged to do so many more. Yet he was more cheerful Lord Castleton told me, than he had ever known him in his most palmy days, when thousands, by courting his nod, accelerated his comparative ruin. To be sure, it obliged him to live the life of a recluse in the very heart of the world; at which I took the liberty of wondering; but he defended it, and declared to me, in confidential conversations, that he never was happier; for he never felt himself in such possession of his mind, or of so fair and just a judgment of mankind. "Crowds," said he, "no longer knock at my door; but those who do, I can depend upon; and one good attends me, worth all, and more than all, I have relinquished—I see the world as it is; I am no longer its dupe; no longer in a false position."

Upon this subject he was sometimes fond of expatiating, and would then honour me with his confidence. "I have run the round of life," said he to me one day; "I have travelled abroad and at home, and revelled, I fear, in pleasure, little restrained by prudence. I have been the gayest of the gay; I have been ambitious, and, with the country, though not the court, successful. In earlier times I loved to distraction, and my love was returned. I have been rich as well as poor—lived with nobles and wits—the highest statesmen—the most successful of generals—the most praised of authors—all the best names of Britain. I have listened with delight to eloquence in the senate, myself a member, and not an obscure one. I have been even an author, and not damned. In short, I believe I have travelled the whole circle of human pursuits, with passions equal to the most passionate. I have, in fact, fed upon excitement, and the hey-day at sixty seems yet not totally over. And yet I can safely say that no hour of my life has been so intensely sweet as when, though under this cloud of fortune, shutting out the world, I have feasted alone, in this cabinet, upon meditations prompted either by my own thoughts or the thoughts of others, in the books you see around me.

"Thought, alone, is happiness, when not melancholy. Its free current, whatever its subject, is to the mind what exer-



cise is to the body ; but when prompted by a feeling of content and unruffled nerves, it becomes the health of the soul, and generates a grateful piety to heaven, such as I am ashamed to say the greatest seeming prosperity never produced. Can I then want society, even if I had not the few friends I value about me ? No ; for I now converse better with the mighty dead, than when tormented with the mighty living. What wonder, then, if I love being alone, especially as the place where I am so, prevents it from ever growing wearisome ; as the moment I am saturated with it, the remedy is at hand, and the world at my door ? In fact, I find the alternation of business and leisure to be the secret of happiness ; useful business, and well employed leisure, or, as Rousseau calls it, ‘judicious inaction.’ My inaction, I trust, is at least not injudicious ; for what more interesting, particularly to an old man who has been tossed about in the world, than to bring his experience into play for the discovery of truth ? This, I can safely say, whether in the streets, or my study, is now my employment, and that

‘ Quid verum atque decens, curo et rogo, et omnis in hoc sum.’ ”

I congratulated him upon this, and said he was, I thought, more enviable than ever he had been ; yet could not help expressing wonder that, being single, he continued in such loneliness as so vast a house must now appear to him. I ventured to ask even if he would not be more cheerful in a smaller mansion ?

His answer was characteristic, though not very consistent with his new-found philosophy.

“ I see your meaning,” said he, at first knitting his brow ; but, soon recovering, he went on. “ You think I have no longer a right to a palace, not being able to fill it as usual. But why not, if it please me, and such be my humour ? You will say, I ought to profit by what I cannot enjoy, and let it for a palace’s rent ; which, indeed, I could do. But never shall the finger of man I condemn point at me as the profligate who has been forced to quit his family mansion. To be sure, it is no longer brilliant with sunshine in the day, or lamps at night, for most of the rooms are shut up ; but I can now do what I could not do before—illumine whatever place I am in with my own thoughts ; thoughts for which I

am all the better, instead of those others which formerly did any thing but enlighten me. I exemplify, therefore, what is so sublimely said by Milton,

'He that has light within his own clear breast,  
May sit i' the centre and enjoy bright day;  
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,  
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun:  
Himself is his own dungeon.'"

Eccentric, and perhaps inconsistent, as this conduct was, it was impossible not to respect Lord Rochfort for pursuing it.

But, turn we to other matters.

## CHAPTER XV.

A CHANGE IN THE PROPERTY OF MR. HASTINGS.—I HAVE AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION WITH LADY HUNGERFORD.—THE MYSTERY REGARDING BERTHA AND HER COUSIN NOT CLEARED.

You have seen and proved a fairer form of fortune  
Than that which is to approach.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Antony & Cleopatra.*

Doubting things go ill, often hurts more  
Than to be sure they do.—*Cymbeline.*

ABOUT this time an event fell out which greatly affected the fortune of Mr. Hastings. I mentioned, I believe, that much of his income, or at least of its redundancy, consisted in West India property. An old country gentleman in Yorkshire cannot well look after plantations across the Atlantic; and, accordingly, Mr. Hastings, like many other great proprietors, depended upon a great agent to manage the concern. This agent just now failed to an immense amount. It ruined many, and, as I have said, greatly affected Mr. Hastings.

But it would have been fortunate if this had been all; for, one cause of the failure was, that at this time the Island of Barbadoes, where all his fine property was situated, was des-

olated by one of those hurricanes which have so often ruined the greatest West India estates. Most of the plantations were destroyed outright: few houses escaped utter destruction, and none without damage. Many persons perished under the ruins, and more were driven into the sea. Above five thousand people lost their lives during this frightful catastrophe; and the property annihilated was said to amount to a million.

So great and general a blow could not pass without involving every family connected with the island and of course Mr. Hastings, whose losses, between the hurricane and his agent's failure, were computed at above £100,000.

Thus are we sometimes visited by a mysterious and inscrutable Providence, to whose decrees, all we have to do is to submit with resignation. This Mr. Hastings did, with the same piety which made him so submissive to Heaven's will, when visited by the loss of his son.

When this was first communicated to me—which it was by Lord Castleton—for so great a destruction, being almost national, had been the subject of special despatches to the government), my blood ran cold, my flesh crept, and I thought of the injury to this high family, but particularly of Bertha's altered prospects, with an affliction beyond any I could have felt had it been my own.

And yet how nobly did she bear it! Her chief and almost only care, as Granville told me in a long letter, which, at my most urgent entreaty, he wrote to relieve my anxiety, was how to soften it to her father, whose rapidly declining health might make such tidings critical, and prevent all hope of recovery.

As, however, the matter could not be kept from him, it was broke to him by degrees. Indeed, the whole extent of the injury was not at first known, and Bertha herself was not acquainted with it. When it was, and post after post brought the account of fresh losses, it was then that all the charm of her character, both for firmness and softness, displayed itself with a lustre which few could imitate.

In this she was greatly supported by the presence of her beloved friend and adviser, Lady Hungerford, who luckily was on the spot to console her. Granville, too, gave himself up to his uncle, and was of essential service to him by his

advice, and assistance in business ; and the prince cousin, I was told, showed himself in the most amiable light, by the warm and delicate attentions which he paid to both his relations in their distress.

My heart envied the prince for this more than for all his other advantages. Happy man ! thought I, who can now shew his real worth, by proving the disinterestedness of his duty and love, and confirm all the influence which his accomplishments have enabled him to acquire.

Partly by these attentions from his friends, partly from his own frame of mind, in which there was not only an innate piety, as has been formerly noticed, but a secret vigour, which uniform prosperity had rather suspended than suppressed, Mr. Hastings was enabled to bear his reverses with dignified composure ; and Bertha, except for his sake, apparently bore them with entire indifference.

"We have yet this dear place left," said she, "from which it was always unpleasant to us to stir ; we have still its gardens and flowers, and the village, and the poor blessing us. Why, then, ought we to quarrel with fortune for confining us to the spot on earth where we most wish to remain ? If the sun would but come out, and you, my dear father get strong enough to let me drive you abroad as usual, to enjoy it, why should storms thousands of miles off affect us ?"

Mr. Hastings, upon these occasions, would kiss Bertha, and her eyes would sparkle at it, and shed new light upon all around (for a while upon her father himself), and that would make her still more pleased. Nor would she allow her pleasure to be checked when he would observe, as he seemed sometimes forced to do, that Foljambe alone would not support the pleasures of Foljambe.

"And yet," she would reply, looking at the books and her musical instruments, "these are not expensive enjoyments ; and these still less," throwing up the window, and inhaling the scent of the flowers. "But there is the sun himself coming out to reproach us for thinking we can want any thing when we have him."

"All this," said Granville, in writing this account, "would affect us, and nobody more than the prince, who would hold up his hands in ecstasy, and exclaim, '*Dieu ! quelle tempe-*

*ramment angelique!*" And then he would look intently at her, and kiss her hand."

But the exertion of Bertha generally ended in a fit of lowness afterwards, when alone with Lady Hungerford, in which, however, she thought only of her father, not of herself. "If he is but spared to us," she would say, "how little shall we feel the want of what is lost!"

"I am very well aware," said Granville, in concluding this account, "of the imprudence I commit towards you, for it will certainly not contribute to your cure, *which, however, is as necessary as ever*. But not only it is not easy to withstand your entreaties, but in informing you of the state of things here under this terrible worldly calamity, I think it almost a duty (I certainly have pleasure in it) to do this justice to my admirable cousin, who, if she had not done so before, would win the hearts of everybody around her."

"As she has mine," said I, throwing the letter from me in an agony of feeling, which yet I could not define, so compounded was it at once of the most tender admiration, jealousy, and despair.

That the happy Adolphus should admire the sweet excellence he courted, and which it was plain now was to crown his wishes, could neither surprise nor distress me; but that he should kiss her hand, *unopposed*, as it should seem (for I carefully examined as to that point), inflicted pangs upon me which I cannot even now forget.

Such was my reasonableness, and again, though alone, I burst out once more with a passage of Rousseau, which I had become fond of:—

"Femmes! Femmes! Objets cheres et funestes! qui la Nature orna pour notre supplice; qui punissent quand on vous brave, et qu'on ni peut ni rechercher ni fuir impunement!"

It was in vain, under these impressions, that I sought to lose them, by plunging more than ever into business; for a material part of that business arose out of this very disaster at Barbadoes, and the Hastings plantation and Hastings losses so frequently occurred, that I could not, if I would, attempt oblivion of the name. In the midst of this struggle, too, the arrival of Lady Hungerford in town prevented all further endeavour, and I returned to the subject with almost greater interest than ever.

My great point was to set the question of the engagement at rest, free from the mystery which Granville had thrown about it; and this I was resolved to try through Lady Hungerford, who seemed alone to have the power to decide it.

That accomplished woman and excellent friend had come back to Berkely Square for a few days only, to prepare for a longer sojourn with the child of her love, to support and comfort whom she for a time gave up the world she was so formed to adorn.

Hearing of Lady Hungerford's arrival, I went to do her homage, as well as to satisfy, if I could, the interested curiosity I have confessed. I was admitted, and found myself once more alone with her. She gave me warm congratulations on my advancement, and prophesied still greater things; but I was deaf to all but what I hoped for—intelligence of Mr. Hastings, Bertha, and her princely cousin. All that I could get from her respecting the latter was—

"I see the papers have been, as usual, busy with what they know nothing about, and you of course, with the rest of the world, have been busy with the papers. Prince Adolphus came over to visit his relations. That is all the world knows, whatever it says.

"And the story of his engagement, then, is a fabrication?" observed I.

I thought lady Hungerford faltered in her reply.

"There are at least no signs of a wedding," said she, "and at any rate, you and I have no business with it."

This was so peremptory, that I did not dare go on, so was silent. She then spoke of Mr. Hastings' illness.

"He is, I fear, dying," said she, "and my poor Bertha's heart is broken with the prospect. Not that her firmness abandons her; on the contrary, she thinks herself born only to support her parent in this his hour of trial. He never sees a tear, nor indeed any thing that might not inspire hope. But all who love her cannot but feel for her unprotected situation, if the event happens. The fortune she will have, notwithstanding the late losses, will only expose her more to danger, unless she marries her cousin."

This was the first voluntary allusion Lady Hungerford had made to such an event, since our memorable conversation, when she so pointedly told me to lay aside all my ambitious,

all my romantic thoughts about Bertha ; and though her situation naturally, as it were, elicited this mention of her by Lady Hungerford, the latter seemed instantly to recollect herself, and would have changed the subject, had I not said, in answer to her last remark,

"I had really hoped, for her sake, that the report of the world was true, and that by this time Prince Adolphus would have been the protector you wish for her, under a higher title than that of cousin."

Lady Hungerford seemed impressed with this. A slight flush passed over her cheek.

"This from you ?" she said. "Did you really *hope* this? and can we really suppose you sincere in such a hope?"

"Whatever my feelings, Madam," I replied, "where Miss Hastings' happiness or interest is concerned, you may believe me sincere in any thing and every thing I express."

"And you could really have been glad and easy, if the reports of this engagement had been well-founded?"

"Glad, I believe I could have been—easy, perhaps not; and glad only if Miss Hastings' happiness or welfare had been promoted by it; for to that, willingly, though possibly not joyfully, I could sacrifice my own."

Lady Hungerford, with modest grace, touched my hand upon this, and said,

"Upon my word I could not wish Bertha a better friend, did destiny allow it."

"Still, *destiny*!" I exclaimed. "Yet your ladyship says the report of the engagement is not founded."

"I did not go so far," answered she, "and I will not be entangled into difficulties by words growing out of an embarrassing situation. The very word *engagement*, if critically dissected, might present a thousand difficulties in examining it, and I am imprudent in the last degree to allow this conversation to proceed; so, positively, no more. Have you yet spoken in Parliament?"

I had tact enough to see that I ought now to desist from farther discussion, and longed to be alone, to perpend what had passed. After a few general topics, therefore, I took my leave, not without pleasure from thinking that Lady Hungerford had been, if not more propitious, at least less severe and decisive than formerly upon this too interesting question;

upon which all farther communication with her was interdicted by her returning to the park the very next day.

When alone, I examined more coolly what had passed. I could not, in the first place, conceal from myself that though Lady Hungerford was almost as mysterious as ever regarding the prince, she was by no means so positive as to the expected marriage. Neither had she renewed that oracular style which bade me so positively to lay aside hope, and lie down and die. Yet, on the other hand, she had any thing but denied the engagement, by admitting that there were difficulties, and an embarrassing situation. So there generally are in all engagements, or none need be made.

The match therefore was, at least, not off. The prince might have to settle affairs. He might have been called by duty to the army. Mr. Hastings' illness might have prevented an instant fulfilment, and the ceremony was thus only deferred. All this supported the supposition.

Yet the little necessity for secrecy if the fact existed. All parties their own masters; the match every way so suitable. Why any mystery, if indeed there was any? Why the wish for a protector, and that protector at hand, if nothing opposed? Above all, why the want of explicitness—aye or no—in one who must know; an explicitness which nothing forbade, and kindness recommended?

On the other hand, a prohibition to examine the subject. The phrase, "I will not be entangled in difficulties." Why fear to be so? All this defeated the supposition. And thus I was left in the usual sea of doubt.

At this moment a diversion of interests, which pleasingly occupied my thoughts, relieved me for a time, and it must be owned it was a relief I much needed.



## CHAPTER XVI.

THE OLD CASTLE OF BARDOLFE CHANGES MASTERS.—MY DREAMS ABOUT IT.—I AM MORE AND MORE EMBARRASSED ABOUT PRINCE ADOLPHUS.

Thus far my fortune keeps an upward course.

SHAKSPEARE.—3 *Henry VI.*

THE post, for which I was now always keenly anxious, brought me a letter from Mr. Manners; not an unexpected event, as I had kept up a constant correspondence with him at his own desire, and informed him of every step of my progress, which much delighted him; for he said he felt for me as a father would for a son; "particularly," added he, "as it was I who first advised, and pointed out the path you were to take. This time, however, it is your turn to advise, in a matter in which I want to consult you; so come to me, if you can, on your first leisure day,"

It may be supposed that I obeyed the summons, and soon found myself at the Grange.

To be there was always to be happy; for never had I forgotten those delightful, as well as profitable, philosophic conversations with this wise and excellent person, which had done me so much good. It was with joy, therefore, that I shook hands with him once more, and wandered with him again in our old haunts in his garden and the forest.

He soon let me into the reason for sending for me, by producing a York paper which had been sent him, and which, at first to my surprise, advertised that the castle and estate of Bardolfe were to be sold, either by auction or private contract.

For Mr. Hastings' sake, I gave a deep sigh at this; but, after a little consideration, I thought it might be a prudent step to take, there being no family ties on his part to this property, and lying, as it did, so wide from Foljambe. In fact, I afterwards found that Granville, on being consulted, had reasoned in the same manner; and the fatal hurricane having occasioned the immediate necessity for a very con-

siderable sum, he had advised the disposal of this property in preference to any other, for the very reasons which had suggested themselves to me.

"Well," said Mr. Manners, when I had done pondering the subject, "you recollect, I suppose, that the proceeds of this estate, when it went out of your family, came into mine; or rather, only into another branch of yours: for you will also recollect that (though by *female* descent) we are Clifords and Bardolfes as well as you."

"It is impossible to forget," cried I, "what was the main cause of the interest you are so good as to take in me, and of my consequent prosperity."

"We will not talk of that," replied he, "but I mention it to account for a wish I have to become the purchaser of what I ought to consider a family estate; for had not my grandmother's fortune been paid in money, perhaps the place itself would be actually mine."

"I am too happy to think so," answered I.

"Well, I have about the wherewithal in the funds to purchase it," observed he, "and can even make money by the exchange; and having heard your pleasure in talking of the place, I want you to describe it more accurately, and perhaps more honestly, than the auctioneer here, who talks of it as if it were Kenilworth."

At this I laughed, and told him he must lower his expectations by many degrees, and that no doubt it was its being the first great interest of my childhood that made me so fond of it.

True to his tenets, "There cannot be a better reason," said he, "were it Warwick or Berkeley itself. As the castle, however, will be thrown in for nothing, and the rent-roll is about £600 a-year, the price asked for it (£18,000) cannot hurt me; and if you can tell me that there are no real objections, I have made up my mind to become the purchaser. What think you, indeed, of my changing my name to the old possessor's? There would then be once again Bardolfes of Bardolfes."

Though this last was *badinage*, I was greatly pleased with the whole scheme, when, after a little musing, he said,

"A thought strikes me, which you may approve or not, as you please. You have now, for a bachelor, a large income.

Suppose you let half of it accumulate, which it soon would, till you muster up the purchase-money. I would then resell it at the same price, or order my executor to do it. Bardolfe Castle would then really belong to a rightful descendant of the name; and when you come to your peerage, which of course you will (*being so eminent a statesman*), there may be once more a Clifford of Bardolfe, or a Lord Bardolfe, if you please; only beware of another Bramham Moor."

This playful humour made the serious plan as to the purchase still more pleasant; especially when he added, "As soon as the place is mine, I shall certainly, as in duty bound, pay my respects to my relations in the neighbourhood."

"Were you other than what you are," observed I, "I should object to this, on account of the homeliness of your reception; for the future *Lord Clifford*, or *Lord Bardolfe*, would not like to see his rustic relations undervalued by the still polished man of the world, though he has been so long estranged from it."

"That they never would be by me," replied he, "for having the sense to confine themselves to their lot, whatever it is: and you must have read me very ill, if you think I should respect them more if they shewed themselves ashamed of it."

He was commencing a lecture upon this, when he returned to the subject of the purchase, which he said he would set about without delay.

"But meantime," added he, "you shall give me a full and true description of it, which I will take with all due allowances for your servid imagination in painting any thing or any person you like; and then perhaps I may get at a little truth."

I highly approved his caution, particularly as it allowed me a latitude of which I did not fail to avail myself; though upon the whole, without *much* exaggeration, I gave him such a picture of it, that he said, as soon as he had made it his own, he would set off to the north to survey it, and asked if it were possible that I could accompany him.

I told him I despaired of it, though nothing would please me more; yet I could not help wondering at his sudden energy, and readiness to leave the Grange, to which he had professed himself so wedded, that he believed nothing could tempt him from it, even for a day.

He looked a little conscious in his reply, when he said,

"Why, I own I am something like Doctor Sangrado, when he was detected by Gil Blas mixing a *little* (mind, it was but a *little*) wine with his water. Now, like Sangrado with his water, I do not love the Grange less, but perhaps would wish to see the world a little more before I die. But pray observe, it is not its follies, its caprice, or its struggles that I want to observe; but its improvements in its arts and manners, which I am told have been miraculous since I was in it. In fact, I think a short tour may do me good, by relieving the sameness of my hermit life, and will make me return to it with heightened enjoyment."

"You allow, then," said I, "I am afraid rather wickedly, that there is a sameness even in the Grange, which might be the better for a little relief?"

"I do," replied he, "and that's the truth on't. Since you left me (and I own, those three or four days you spent with me, and a visit from Lord Castleton and Fothergill, have rather spoiled me), I have seen nobody but Deborah the cook, and Walker the butler; and besides, the Binfield clock is out of order; so you see I cannot stay here till it is repaired, and meantime, a journey to the north will give me a fillip. Thus I am at least not an unreasonable philosopher, the slave of his theory, but confess when the shoe pinches."

So candid an avowal demanded a cessation from raillery, and I felicitated him upon his openness, which he took in good part; and he settled to return with me to London, to make his purchase.

His lawyer I found was Mr. Fountain, and, with that gentleman, there being no factitious difficulty, in order to enhance the costs, he soon after wrote to me from Barnard Castle, that he was lord of the beautiful ruins and fine estate of Bardolfe.

What was an additional pleasure, he had visited his new relations, as he called them; found my father a man of worth, my brothers honest fellows, and was half in love with my mother, for putting him, as he was pleased to say, much in mind of his own.

"You may suppose," said he, "we talked much of t' young doctor." In fine, he was much pleased both with the estate and the castle; so much with the latter, that he was fitting up three or four rooms for a Christian to live in when he came to visit it, preferring it greatly, he said, to that dreary *Chartreuse Bolton le Moors*.

Meantime, though in London, and plunged in business, it may be supposed I kept a watchful eye upon the spot where almost all my interests were centered, and I daily looked with tremor for the arrival of the post from Foljambe. The illness of Mr. Hastings—still protracted—kept my nerves on the stretch ; for if he died, what would become of Bertha ? With so much greater need of comfort and support, I more than ever concluded that she would naturally seek the prince as her lawful protector, for of the engagement there could be no doubt.

Under these impressions, therefore, I was struck with wonder by a letter from Granville, which after informing me in the body of it that Mr. Hastings was better, announced in a postscript, that in consequence of it, the prince was about to return to Germany.

This renewed all my speculations, particularly as Granville added, that both he and Bertha seemed particularly happy and pleased with one another. He then gave me news about himself, which, but for the jealousy which this intimation created, would have filled me with unalloyed delight.

Attendance on a sick bed is not, in general, the most auspicious moment for pressing, successfully, a suit of love ; yet, in this instance, it proved so to the happy Granville. The interest kindled in each other for their common and lovely favorite, and their own dedication of themselves to support her under her desolation, had so mutually endeared Lady Hungerford and himself, that what had not yet happened now finally took place, and Lady Hungerford, the richly-endowed—the rose and expectancy of the court and of fashion—had become the betrothed of the accomplished, though comparatively poor, younger brother—Granville.

A strange consequence of this was, that my joy at his success, great as it was (for how much reason had I to love him), was heightened by I know not what unaccountable sensation of hope which it kindled in my own heart. The disproportion between Granville and his superior mistress was scarcely less than between me and mine ; if I could call any one mine merely because I loved her, though without return. Lady Hungerford had five thousand a-year, with the world at her feet. Granville, perhaps, had not more than five hundred, though with high official expectations. Yet Lady Hunger-

ford sacrificed golden prospects to unite herself to a fine-minded man, whose heart she had long known was devoted to her, and whose cultivated intellect and disposition were of kindred with her own.

A very proper reason this for supposing that Miss Hastings would distinguish *me* as Lady Hungerford had Granville ! Yet I could not divest myself of the flattering thought that, as far as mind and disposition went, I, too, might claim kindred with Mr. Hastings' daughter ; and, as to worldly circumstances, I too had expectations, and more in possession than Granville himself.

Alas ! in my sanguine nature—my blind enthusiasm—I totally passed over, not only the little circumstance that I never had had reason to think myself more than esteemed by Bertha ; but, strange to say, I left out of the account the conviction that she was engaged to another. Of such materials are lovers composed !

A second perusal of Granville's letter, however, soon brought back all my doubts and fears ; for though the return of the prince to Germany surprised me, he and Bertha *were particularly happy together*. What could be inferred but that he went to settle affairs previous to his nuptials, which he would return, as soon as possible, to consummate ?

With this conviction pressing upon me, my excitement was at its height by the prince's arrival in town, and presentation at court, to take leave on returning to the continent. The papers, too, of that morning, as usual, busy with gossip about the great, had announced my own very conclusion, that he was soon to revisit England, after settling some private business, in order to lead his fair cousin to the Hymeneal altar, &c. &c.

It may be supposed, whether true or false, how this fixed me, and how I watched the prince at the levee, whither I went expressly for that purpose.

To do him justice, he might have kindled the jealousy of any—even a favored lover—so much had he the *air noble*, which he had not been able to conceal in his loose wrapper and travelling cap, when he caused me so much perturbation on the north road. He was now set off by his rich uniform and military order, and I looked and felt little by his side (for I got purposely near him) when I contemplated my own un-

meaning coat of olive cloth, poorly relieved by its steel buttons and satin lining, with a thin spit by my side, not to be named with his burnished gold sabre and imposing sabre-tash. His graceful manner, too, when spoken to by royalty, threw me farther and farther into the background, and a bitter pang shrunk my heart when I forced myself to confess that he seemed fairly worthy of Bertha.

My attention, however was still more fixed when, after being spoken to, he joined Lord Castleton, by whom I was standing, and in reply to his question whether he was not soon to return from Germany, he replied in the negative.

"We have been told," said Lord Castleton, smilingly, for he knew him, and had known his father, and spoke with an air of frank *badinage*, "that not only we might expect that honor, but that the cause for it is of a particularly interesting nature."

"Ah!" said he, in tolerable English, relieved by French, "I have been told so too, by your omniscient newspapers, but I assure you I am not so happy."

At the same time his smile, when he said this, contradicted it; for it betokened any thing but a desponding, still less a rejected lover. My interest and embarrassment rose to its highest point.

The words "not so happy" accompanied me the whole day afterwards. How often did I turn them so as to mean every thing, or nothing. Could they be taken literally? Oh! no. He seemed himself too happy. The intimacy between the cousins could not come to such a termination. The reports of the world—the admissions of Granville—the mysteries of Lady Hungerford, and her arguments from *destiny*—could not so end. It was plainly a little piece of male coquetry in the prince, or a desire to rid himself of annoying surmises.

The repetition, however, of the assertion, in a quarter where trifling is not allowed, appeared to put the matter out of doubt the other way. The queen, it seems, had a private party that evening, and, fond of her countrymen, the prince was not only there, but she questioned him on the subject, giving the report in the papers as her excuse. There was the same denial as there had been at the levee, only the denial was to majesty, whom it would have been unseemly to

deceive, and more than once repeated, because the question was reiterated. There could, therefore, be no doubt about it, in the opinion of Lord Castleton, who was at the party, and told me the occurrence.

I passed a sleepless night in consequence ; my whole mind in *nubibus* ; the conduct of the cousins was more and more a riddle.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### I MEET LORD ALBANY IN THE WORLD.—ITS CONSEQUENCES.

Know my name is lost ;  
By treason's tooth bare gnawn, and canker bit :  
Yet am I noble as the adversary  
I come to cope withal.

Thou art a traitor ;  
A most toad-spotted traitor ! Say'st thou no ?  
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent,  
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
THOU LIEST.

SHAKSPEARE.—*King Lear*.

THE day after the queen's party, Prince Adolphus embarked for Germany. So said the tattling papers, this time, without a comment.

I, at least, breathed more freely for that event. Still, however, I was in a tumult of unsatisfied doubt, which I felt nothing could allay, but a certain assurance from the other quarter, either that the engagement did not exist, or that the prince, for private reasons, had misled even the queen in regard to it.

Yet, how was I to obtain the information I panted for ? Lady Hungerford had positively refused it ; Granville seemed to have told me all he knew ; and the still most precarious state of Mr. Hastings, which detained those friends at Foljambe, precluded all opportunity of succeeding in personal inquiries.

In the midst of this embarrassment an event arose, the



most important of my life, even if it had not given, as it did, a colour to it, of the very utmost consequence to my reputation and after proceedings. As it gave rise, therefore, to much discussion, both public and private, at the time, and was differently represented according to the feelings upon it by very different parties, I will set it down in all simplicity and plainness as the facts arose, without an attempt at varnish or comment, leaving the reader to judge for himself.

Lord Albany, of whom no mention has been made since the unhappy issue of his quarrel with poor Foljambe Hastings, left England as soon as his recovery from his own wound would permit him. Whether he felt himself so much to blame in having, in so trifling a case, exposed his own life, and cause the loss of that of his friend, that he feared the censure of society, and so absented himself from it till the matter should be blown over (all which, from his character, is not probable), or whether a career of impetuous pleasure in which he embarked abroad, at first, as he said, to make him forget this lamentable catastrophe, but which at last laid such hold of him, that he cared not to return to his sober country; certain it is, that for near four years he had remained a sort of exile from his native land. The interval he had passed in visiting the remotest, as well as the neighbouring parts of Europe, and after traversing Greece, the Archipelago, and Turkey, had extended his travels over Mount Caucasus, Circassia, and Georgia. These examined, he seated himself alternately at Vienna and Paris, with what profit to his manners or character the sequel will shew.

On his return to London, he found the gossip of the town employed upon the handsome Adolphus, who had made a kind of sensation at the palace; and as the papers had put the *beau monde* upon the scent, everybody, for a day or two, was inquiring into the story of the two cousins. All were convinced that they had been, some that they were still, betrothed; some that the contract was broken off; all anxious to know or explain why.

I had listened rather uneasily for two days, at dinners where I was present, to these discussions, but held my peace;—when, on the third, I had the misfortune to meet Lord Albany.

It was at Lord Hartlebury's, a valued friend of Lord Castleton's, a veteran general officer of known gallantry, and

of high character for honour and good sense, that I met the marquess. Not knowing of his return home, I was surprised to see him enter the drawing-room before dinner, with a visage and manner of even increased ferocity and haughtiness. I knew him directly ;—indeed there was no mistaking his look of recklessness and disdain. Whether he recognised me, though he perused me with his glass, I don't know. He certainly acted as if he did not ; and having seen me not above three or four times, and that when I was a comparative stripling, five years before, I acquit him (not having been introduced) of all knowledge of my person.

Nothing particular passed during the actual dinner, and if (not having been presented to him) he shewed me no civility, it was no more than he did by his known friends, who were nearer to him, and over whom he seemed to domineer with a most imperious and offensive air. It was easy to see he was not popular, and Lord Hartlebury himself, though he shewed deference to his quality, was evidently annoyed by his manner.

No one had yet mentioned the common topic of the day, when he himself led to it, by asking if any body had seen the illustrious stranger, whom the queen and the whole bedchamber had not yet done talking of.

"I have," said Lord Hartlebury, "and I am not surprised at the impression he made, for he is as soft and graceful in manner, particularly to women, as he is decidedly handsome."

"Indeed!" said Lord Albany. "Then how came he to fail in carrying his point with that pert damsel, his cousin, my old flame and acquaintance? To be sure, she is a devilish coquette, and has jilted not a few ; poor Harry Melford and me, you know, among them."

Here he looked round with a sardonic laugh, as if to shew either that the fact was not true, or that he was perfectly indifferent to it.

"If you mean Miss Hastings," said Lord Hartlebury, "I did not know you had been one of her admirers, much less that she had jilted you."

"No!" cried Lord Albany (seeming to think he had disclosed more than was necessary) ; I thought everybody knew that. But I could not long occupy myself with such a country bit, though an enormous coquette, who would flirt with

anybody that would flirt with her. Melford, me, her cousin Mansell, and——”

“That too is new to me,” said Lord Hartlebury, interrupting him.

“But yet,” continued Lord Albany, “I am surprised, that to be married to a prince, though a poor one, had not charms enough for a person whose father is always boasting, on the mere strength of his name, of a high descent, which I believe he cannot make out. At any rate, the prospect of such an alliance ought to have cured her of flirting; particularly as they say the family is ruined, and that supposed fine fortune of hers most cruelly attenuated. She will, at least, not be able to jilt many more.”

Had this insolent nobleman stabbed me to the heart with a dagger, he could not have given me more pain than he did by this speech, in which he was by no means countenanced by any one of the party. On the contrary, all looked aloof, some resentful, and one generous one, the young Sir William Wentworth, to whom I had been introduced by Granville, and the neighbours in Yorkshire, though little known to Mr. Hastings, had risen to express what he thought of this slander, when I prevented him, for my heart was full, and my blood boiled.

“Lord Albany,” said I, “one would have thought, that having taken the life of the brother, in revenge for your disappointment with the sister, you might have spared that sister, and been satisfied without slandering a lady as irreproachable as heaven. You have, too, in what you have said, disparaged and spoken disrespectfully of a gentleman of known worth, and who, though not equal to you in title, is of a birth far superior to your own. The good taste of such sneers against those whose alliance you once courted, though without success, I will not inquire into, any more than the bravery of it, in their absence, and that of all their relations; but when you come to a positive imputation of the crime of levity and jilting to this young lady, as proved in your own instance, as a friend, though a humble one, of the family, and knowing the circumstances, I am bound to tell you, you have been guilty of a wilful violation of the truth.”

The whole company was startled at this reproof; yet more, seemingly, from apprehension of the consequences, than be-

cause they disapproved it. The young Sir William, too, of an ardent spirit, and who had just got his commission in the guards, absolutely clapped his hands, and exclaimed, "Quite right, quite right."

All the rest preserved a profound silence, though it was easy to perceive they were much moved; when Lord Albany, after eying Sir William, said, with more coolness than I expected,

"I perceive I have two challengers upon my hands, to whom I am expected to give battle. One of them I know—Sir William Wentworth, a gentleman at least; but you, Sir, of whose very name I am ignorant, who the devil are *you*?"

The whole company seemed again moved by this insolence, and Lord Hartlebury rose to interfere, but before he could speak, I replied,

"My name is lost; yet it was once well known as honourable and noble in the history of my country, long before your lordship's had emerged from obscurity."

Lord Albany looked mad with rage, and the table seemed struck with still more interest at this answer, which was increased when I went on:

"My name is De Clifford, once owned by the lords of Clifford Castle, whose resentments, when they had any, never stooped to calumniate a defenceless lady in her absence."

"Right again, by G—!" cried Sir William, who could not repress his feelings.

"I believe I now recollect you," answered Lord Albany, almost suffocated with pride. "I think you were a servitor, or some such thing, when I was at Oxford, and a follower of the Hastings family. It seems that at least you have not forgot your duty to them, and earn your wages."

"My lord," now interposed Lord Hartlebury, "this must not go on. Were Mr. De Clifford not the gentleman I know him to be, he is my guest, and I cannot permit such taunts to proceed. But what Mr. De Clifford has said of himself I know to be true; and as a gentleman, even if he were not in high confidential office under the king, in all but rank he is fully your lordship's equal."

"My lord," returned the Marquess, rising from his chair, "you may permit, or not permit, what you please. I take this speech of yours as an order to be gone, and I obey. For

this young gentleman, (pointing at Sir William), the name he bears will certainly make me gratify the eagerness he seems to have, to be brought into notice. For the other, I shall beg to suspend what, perhaps, he expects from me, till I have made inquiries whether he is worthy of it."

So saying, he stalked to the door, red with passion ; but not before Lord Hartlebury, who had rung, said to the servant who answered the bell, loud enough to be heard,

"Shew Lord Albany out of the house."

There was a considerable pause, every one looking at the other, and stealthily at me, in silence ; when Lord Hartlebury gallantly said to me,

"Mr. De Clifford, I am most distressed that this should have happened anywhere, but in particular at my table ; and I think it but due to you to bear witness, which I shall do in any way you may be pleased to command, to the honour you have shewn in defending an innocent lady from the foulest attack I ever witnessed, to say nothing of the gross affront to yourself ; and whatever the consequences, I shall feel honour and pleasure if my testimony or support, in any manner you may please to require them, can be of the least service to you."

This address from the generous veteran seemed to be echoed by a murmur of approbation from the rest of the company, whose social enjoyments being interrupted by what had happened, the party broke up. Sir William Wentworth, however, in going out, taking me to a corner of the hall, said he had something to say to me, and asked me to set him down, when he would talk to me in the carriage, to which I of course agreed.

His business, I found, proceeded from the same generosity he had shewn at the table, when Lord Albany had so disgraced himself.

"The proud ruffian," said he, "for so I must call him, will certainly challenge you ; indeed he can never shew his face if he does not. What he may do by me I don't know ; but when his message comes, my request is that you will allow me and no one else to be your second."

I thanked the gallant fellow, said it should be so, and we parted for the night.

Well, I was now far advanced in the progress of life ; I had

achieved what might be comparatively called greatness and fortune ; I had certainly acquired no inconsiderable knowledge of men, and some of women ; and I had now, for the sake of a woman, an experiment on my hands of the effects of a challenge, which might, and probably would, terminate my own life, unless I took that of another.

As I had never fired a pistol but once, and my adversary had fatally proved his skill, I felt that the former would be the result. But the cause kept me up. I felt that Wentworth's name for Albany, "Ruffian," was a true one, and that his rank could not alter it. I felt that he was more ; that he had acted as a scoundrel towards her I had defended. His insolence to myself I might have passed, if the customs of the world would have permitted it ; at least my feelings would have been less excited, perhaps I may say, less firm, if the wrong had been confined to myself. But when Bertha, the angel of my heart, though lost to me—when *her* honour was concerned ! How reckless did it make me ! How proud should I be even to die in her defence !

These thoughts occupied half my night ; and, spite of many punctuous visitings, I became impatient in the morning for the marquess's message.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### I AM CHALLENGED BY LORD ALBANY.—THE RESULT.

The wound that bred this meeting  
Cannot be cured by words.

SHAKESPEARE.—3 *Henry VI.*

He cannot by the duello avoid it.

*Twelfth Night.*

THE morning came, and with it, though at a late hour, the appearance of the Honourable Colonel Montfort, a gentlemanly man, of polite address ; one of those who, as Sir Lucius says, are in their quarrels as sharp and as polished as

their sword. After preliminary civilities, and announcing that he came from Lord Albany, he opened the matter at once, and not unhandsomely said.

"I am rejoiced, in the first place, to assure you that the marquess confesses himself wrong for having presumed to question your sufficiency, in point of birth and station, to meet him in the field."

"May I ask," said I, "how, or to whom, I am obliged for having this important point cleared up?"

"To Lord Hartlebury, in the first place," replied the colonel; "to whom, not choosing to consult him himself, the marquess referred me, and he to Lord Castleton, who, having given the most satisfactory explanations, I convinced Lord Albany that he was bound in honour, not only to waive his objections, but to make you an apology for having entertained them. This he has not exactly authorized, but on my own responsibility I take it upon myself to do so."

I thanked the colonel for his attention to me in this respect, which I thought comparatively of little consequence.

"True," said Colonel Montfort, "the real point is the thing; for, from the account given me by Lord Albany, I fear there can be no alternative between you. I fear it, because, soldier as I am, I should be glad not to despair, as I do, of the ample apology I am directed to require."

"Are you aware of the cause for the provocation?" asked I.

"I believe I am," replied he; "but I come not here to defend Lord Albany, but to seek reparation for the deepest injury that a man's honour can receive, whether provoked or not."

"All my answer, then," said I, "while I thank you for your politeness, is to say that, under such provocation, apology is out of the question."

"I thought so," observed he. "May I ask whom you mean to represent you as your friend?"

"Sir William Wentworth."

"Of the first guards?"

"Yes."

"A young, and inexperienced, but a man of spirit and honour. Yet I could have wished it had been any other."

"Why?"

"He is implicated himself. For his lordship says, his life is not worth a feather, unless he has satisfaction from you both. However, I have no right to advise. I will call upon Sir William. The day is far advanced ; but I trust you may hear from me before evening."

Thus finished the most portentous interview which in my life I had yet encountered. But all reflection upon it was precluded by the meeting between Colonel Montfort and Sir William, almost on the steps of the house, as the former departed. They immediately adjourned to the park ; and in half an hour Sir William returned with an offer, for my determination, of the most sequestered part of the park, that very evening, or Wimbledon the next morning.

An enemy all my life to suspense and delay, I instantly chose the first, and with this Sir William proceeded to Colonel Montfort's lodgings, having promised also to bring me his pistols ; I, in the absence of all fear of such a mischance, never having yet provided myself with those instruments of gentlemanly satisfaction.

Left to myself, I naturally engaged in a self-examination, and anxiously weighed my position. Totally unskilled in the use of any weapons, whether of defence or offence, and fully aware of the marquess's superiority, already so fatally proved, I gave myself up to death, or some grievous bodily hurt. This was, however, the least part of my anxiety, and when I reflected that Bertha would know that it was for *her* sake, and in defence of *her* honor, there was even something sweet in it.

But though I had not reflected much on the subject, I was by no means convinced of the lawfulness of duelling, and in vain pleaded the customs of the world, and the cruel blow it would be to my reputation if I shrank from the affair. Then, what was my position in it? Though Lord Albany had been the aggressor, it was not towards me. I might have been silent like the rest of the company. It was I, therefore, who had given the affront, and put him in the situation, which he could not avoid, of demanding satisfaction.

This was not a pleasant reflection, and I had almost made up my mind to receive his shot, in which case, should I escape, the affair would not go on, and all might be well. But *could* I escape? Or, if I did, was I sure there would be an



end? Might he not insist on going on? and was he not savage enough to do so? and would not then the first danger be thrown away? In short, would he not kill me, if I did not kill him? and was it not therefore self-defence?

This reasoning, such as it was, convinced me; and when I again thought of the bloody, bullying character of the man, together with his infamous charges against Miss Hastings, my scruples vanished one after the other, and by the time Sir William came to fetch me, just after sunset, I had pretty well made up my mind to kill or be killed in a cause which I thought so just and honorable. Who ever has scruples when he goes into the field in a national war? Why does he take the field? Because there is no law but of arms to appeal to. Here, though there was the law of the land, it reached not the case of a defenceless and virtuous woman scandalously calumniated, or the consequences of having asserted her cause.

With these reflections, which my spirited young companion highly approved, we arrived first on the ground, the west extremity of the park, beyond the ranger's lodge. The sentinels at the powder magazine saw us, and suspected our business; but it was not their duty, nor did it accord with their profession to interrupt us.

We did not wait long; for in a minute or two Albany and his friend, together with the surgeon-general of the guards whom Colonel Montfort and Sir William had requested to attend, arrived on the ground. I saluted them, to which his lordship, who seemed more than usually dogged and sullen, did not deign to reply, but goaded Colonel Montfort to make haste. We were, however, retarded by his own desire for vengeance; for when it was agreed upon by the seconds that we should fire at twelve paces, he insisted upon nine, which occasioned a debate; till I myself, who gave up my life for lost, and thought the only chance I had for my want of skill was to consent to the proposal, desired the seconds (for Colonel Montfort joined mine in refusing the motion) to waive all discussion, but let us take our ground. For I was, moreover, more and more exasperated at this thirst for blood in one I thought a wild beast, and felt a recklessness in consequence myself, which, at least, was not natural to me. We therefore, against the will of our friends, stood at the shorter distance.

We fired by word of command, and it pleased Heaven that I should escape ; for the noble savage, as he afterwards owned, resolving to kill, aimed at my head, and, firing too high, his ball went through my hat, and knocked it off ; while mine, though without any object but the body at large, took effect upon his knee, the pan of which it broke, and lodged in the socket. The exquisite pain of this made him instantly fall, and I ran up to assist him with the gentlemen present.

What was my own and their horror, when, though writhing in torture, he told me to go to my ground, and desired another pistol !

Colonel Montford said it was impossible, and signed to some of the men of the guard-house (whom it seems he had ordered to be in readiness) to come up and give assistance. Two of them went off for a hand-barrow ; and the surgeon having done all he could to stanch the blood, the rash and ill-governed man was conveyed to the ranger's house, as the nearest asylum, where the surgeon on a nearer inspection, declared the wound, from the havoc made among the sinews, of the most serious aspect.

In effect to close this disagreeable part of the recital at once, and return to it no more, the king's surgeon being called in, both declared that life, if indeed it could be preserved at all, depended upon amputation above the knee, which was accordingly effected two days after.

Thus, to my own astonishment, I found myself, by the will of Providence, delivered from a danger I thought inevitable ; and apparently by accident, but undoubtedly through the same will, made the instrument of vengeance against this proud, licentious man. Oh ! how did his behaviour make me recollect Fothergill's indignant, yet pathetic, invective against the same man, joined with another almost in the same circumstances, some years before !

On leaving the ranger's house, Montfort himself joined Sir William and me in council what was to be done ; and as we had all been seen by the magazine guard, to whom the two officers were known, it was settled that we should retire to Calais, until the opinions of the surgeons were decidedly known, and I returned to Green Street to prepare for the journey.

Here, to my surprise and pleasure, I found Lord Castleton

affectionately waiting for me, having called once before. When I told him the event, he congratulated me on my safety, though he deplored the necessity for my instant retirement.

"As to the origin of the affront," said he, "I have heard it all from Lord Hartlebury, who thought you so much in the right, and his guest in the wrong, that he could have willingly, he said, old as he was, have taken your place had it been necessary. But what you inform me of is serious, and the old soldier has himself made notes of the cause of quarrel, in which he has been joined by some of his guests, who equally approve of the spirit and honour of your conduct. To tell you the truth," added he, "it only confirms what I have long suspected, that the interest you have always shewn about this young lady and her family has proceeded from something more than the mere feeling of a *preux chevalier*. But of this, nothing now; your first object must be freedom from arrest, and to get out of the country as soon as you can. Meantime, as it will be all over the town to-morrow, and will soon spread to Foljambe, I wish you to see these notes of Lord Hartlebury, and tell me if they are accurate; which, if they are, I will send them to your friends, Lady Hungerford and Granville, that you may not be misrepresented where, perhaps, you would most wish to be properly understood."

I could have worshipped Lord Castleton for this consideration, and greedily perused Lord Hartlebury's notes, which I found as exact almost as if taken by a short-hand writer; and I felt relieved that, upon such an authority, my fame would stand clear, and that neither Mr. Hastings nor Bertha could think I had been officious in defending them both from so gross an attack upon them in their absence.

This I told Lord Castleton was my chief concern, and he promised to look minutely to it. How did I thank him? He then, as it was too late to send to the banker's gave me his pocket-book, which contained a hundred-pound note, which, with my own, made up a sufficient sum; and soon after Sir William coming to me in a chaise, by agreement, I took leave of my kind and noble friend—noble in nature, more even than in rank—in a few hours was at Dover, and in a few more at Calais.

## CHAPTER XIX.

I TAKE REFUGE AT CALAIS, WHERE I RECEIVE INTERESTING INTERESTING LETTERS FROM GRANVILLE AND LORD HARTLEBURY, WHICH PUT ME AT REST AS TO THE EFFECT OF MY RENCONTRE WITH LORD ALBANY ON THE FAMILY AT FOL-JAMBE, BUT CLEAR UP NOTHING ON THE GREAT POINT.—AN UNEXPECTED VISIT FROM FOTHERGILL MAKES ME MORE UNCERTAIN THAN EVER; AND AN UNEXPECTED ACCESSION OF FORTUNE FILLS ME WITH EXCITEMENT.

Since you will buckle fortune on my back,  
I must have patience to bear the load.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Richard III.*

ON our journey Sir William informed me that he had occupied his morning before he met Colonel Montfort pretty much as Lord Hartlebury had done, in drawing up an account of the gratuitous and unfounded attack, in all its offensive terms, which Lord Albany had made upon Miss Hastings; that he had just time to add the result of the meeting, on his return from the park, and had left it in a letter, to be sent the next day to Granville, “for yours, and I may add,” said he, “my own justification.”

I was struck with this forethought in a man so young, and not sorry that my justification, if I wanted it, should thus be a double one from eye and ear witnesses.

It may be supposed we passed an anxious time at Calais, watching for every packet which came in, and which in truth brought many letters from our friends.

The town was, as usual, divided at first, and Lord Albany as the sufferer, and whose death was expected, had on that account a larger body of friends than his little popularity could have otherwise commanded. By these it was said that my interference had been gratuitous, officious, and uncalled for, and I had therefore given the first offence. But the stout and cool Lord Hartlebury soon cleared up all tendency to defend Lord Albany or to blame me, especially when he had laid before that just man, the king himself (who

desired it), the same account he had given to Lord Castleton.

This of course refuted the assertion which had at first been made, not merely by Lord Albany's friends, but by the votaries and purveyors of gossip, that, without provocation, I had in the grossest manner given the marquess the lie.

As this had been dressed up in form by the scandalous papers, to whose virtuous editors it gave many a dinner, I thought myself of writing a plain and succinct account of the affair to Granville; for I was tremblingly alive as to what might be thought of it by her who would not, I knew, thank me for having made her the subject of conversation. Recollecting, however, that it had already been done by Lord Hartlebury's and Wentworth's notes, I contented myself with billets, which I wrote from Dover, both to Granville and Lady Hungerford, recommending my cause to the protection of those friends, and imploring that they would procure my acquittal from Mr. Hastings and his daughter of having officiously become their defender.

To these I received in a few days, at Calais, answers that made my heart dance with joy, and almost put to flight the anxiety I was feeling for the fate of the mutilated Lord Albany.

"Rest satisfied," said the good Granville, "for you could not, I believe, be in better hands than your own, both with father and daughter, even without the testimonials that have been received as to your conduct in what gave rise to this unhappy affair. Mr. Hastings (who, I should tell you, is so much better, that we had no scruple to lay the account before him) was particularly pleased with your telling the marquess that 'our birth,' to use his words, 'was far superior to his own. An upstart, said he, 'whose family were never known till the Revolution! I want no other proof,' added my uncle, 'of the advantages of ancient birth than this gentlemanly conduct of Mr. De Clifford; nor can I forget that in the old times his Bardolfe ancestors and mine fought on the same side.'"

"As for Bertha," continued Granville, "I leave it to another pen to console your fears about her. Suffice it that she thinks of your zeal for her fair fame as I am sure she ought, and I would add, as you could wish—only I know not how far that wish may extend, particularly now the prince

has left us. All of us unite in opinion on the gallantry of your conduct, and in gratitude for your safety, which we hope may not be farther endangered, though the accounts of the marquess are by no means decisive as to his safety."

If this letter pleased me, what did I not feel on reading Lady Hungerford's?

"Console yourself," said she, "for you are *chevalier sans reproche*, as well as *preux*. Far from supposing that the name you have so well defended has been compromised by you, all here—not only the rest of us, but she most concerned—fix the blame where alone it is deserved, and think only of the generous friend and gallant avenger you have shown yourself to be. I believe myself that I am imprudent in telling you how much, while grateful for it, the danger you have been in, affected us; and when we add the cause, can I conceal the effects of it on her who was most interested in the event? At first she seemed confounded with the distress of thinking herself the object of public observation, perhaps of public animadversion; she was melancholy, silent, and lost in thought; and when she recovered her speech, observed, she did not think there was a man in the world who would have done this except her cousin the prince, or Mr. De Clifford. Her tears then began to flow fast—yes, the tears of this daughter of my heart, who was sought to be "done to death by slanderous tongues," proclaimed how she thanked you. Mistake me not, however. Though my respect and regard for you, heightened to the utmost by this proof of your generous devotedness, lead me to give you this satisfaction, to allay the fears you have expressed, you must not construe it into more than it is,—the most perfect gratitude; nor think the abstraction of thought she has been in ever since the event any thing but the natural uneasiness of a retired and delicate mind, at finding she has been made the talk of the world. These things I tell you, my young friend and pupil, because that sanguine disposition of yours might catch at this improperly; especially since the departure of the prince may again call forth spirits which had better be laid. The feelings of this beloved child have lately been too much excited, and in this last affair outraged, not to make me side with her in thinking that the most entire retreat from notice is the best restorative to her peace. Her brother's untimely and fearful

death ; her father's danger (though that has subsided) ; the blow to his fortune (though that affects not her, except as increasing the curiosity of which she dreads to be the subject) ; the whole matter of Prince Adolphus's visit and departure making her still a public theme ; and lastly, this cruel affair ! — Confess there is enough to affect and occupy this most delicate, though at the same time this firmest of minds.

“ Let me not, however, end in gloom. The happy prospect of her father's recovery has already produced a change for the better ; and if this dreadful man recovers too, to repent of his sins, and relieve *you* from danger, and her from continuing the subject of an impertinent world, her sweet nature may resume its play, and she be again happy, as in that time which she says was the happiest of her life, when she taught you and her brother French, and all of you dug in your gardens together.

“ And now adieu. We daily watch the post for accounts of Lord Albany, which are furnished by my porter, whom I have ordered to make daily inquiries, heaven knows, more for your sake than his.”

Such was the letter of this distinguished lady to the once forlorn and decayed gentleman, the scorned at Oxford, and the banished from Foljambe Park. It may be supposed that it exercised my reasoning powers not a little to ascertain whereabouts I was. That I was rather thanked than thought officious, set one fear at rest ; that I was even elevated, by the thought of being esteemed the contrary, my happier feeling convinced me ; that my zeal as well as danger called forth tears, and if so, “ tears such as angels shed,” went to my heart.

But then again, why all this caution, lest I should catch at it improperly ? Why take such pains to shew that though Prince Adolphus had departed, I was never to return ? Why, unless the prince was to return too, to claim rights, which would for ever put an end to all other pretensions ?

Add to this, the coupling of his name with mine, as the only other person in the world ready to avenge her, though I alone had had the good fortune to be the champion of her innocence. This failed not to impress me, notwithstanding the return to Germany. No ; there seemed no occasion for

Lady Hungerford's caution ; it was clear the engagement was not broken, and the subject continued one of thorns.

Though my situation, therefore, and the pending fate of the marquess, gave me full employ in other matters, I resolved, as soon as this cloud should a little subside (if it did so), to return to the subject with Granville, at least till the real history of the cousins should be developed. To this I thought I had now a sort of right ; though *what* right, except from the consequence which a lover thinks he derives from having faced death for his mistress's sake, I could not satisfy even myself.

Be that as it may, I walked with a more erect chest and a firmer step to the quay, after the receipt of these letters, whenever I went to seek farther news from England.

The account was favourable. The fever occasioned by the amputation of the leg had been got under, "and if this continues," said Lord Castleton, who gave me the intimation, "such is the dislike to the marquess for his conduct, and so little the disposition to be strict with you or your friend Wentworth, that I am told you will be certainly admitted to bail, even if proof could be given against you."

As for Wentworth, he had grown tired of Calais, and thinking it vastly more comfortable to wait the event at Paris than either Calais or London, he seemed by no means anxious to return to the last to give bail ; and perhaps I might have gone to Paris too, but for my anxiety to lose no more posts than were necessary in hearing from Foljambe Park.

I certainly heard again, and that soon, but the news brought concerned Granville's happiness rather than the satisfaction of my interests ; for it announced a tide of good fortune. First, his appointment to the splendid embassy he had been so long waiting for ; and next (enviable rogue), his approaching union with the female I most admired, and, but one, most loved in the world. What is more, he was instructed by the whole party to request me, if I could return in safety, to accompany Lord Castleton to be present at the ceremony, or if that nobleman could not be spared from his post, to come alone.

The pen trembled in my hand, and the heart fluttered in my breast, when I said yes !

There was yet a fortnight to the time, and I became more



than ever anxious for the important certificate of the faculty that my antagonist was out of danger. That came at last; and I own (I hope it was not unpardonable, but) I did triumph a little that this disgrace of nobility, this hateful man, had been so severely punished without taking his life. As the limb was amputated so high as to dismember him of nearly his thigh as well as leg, he was condemned to crutches for life; and as the cause of it became a part of his history, and was always remembered, he could no where present himself but as the calumniator of innocence, and the insulter of a woman from disappointment and revenge.

Impregnable as was his pride, this he could not bear. It was not the mutilation, but the cause of it, that forbade his shewing himself at court, or indeed extensively in other high society; and, wholly unable to bear the finger of censure to be pointed at him (not so much for having meanly attempted to sully a lady's reputation, as for having been so punished for it), he once more fled his country, and bestowed himself where he was not so well known, abroad.

My return to England was now made easy, and the more agreeable from being hailed by the congratulations of numerous acquaintances, some of them friends. Among the latter, I received a warm letter from Manners, and, to my astonishment, a visit from Fothergill, who had been deputed, on the part of Queen's, to the Convocation, and was in town for a few days.

I had not seen him since my memorable departure from Oxford on the pedestrian excursion which he recommended, and which I considered as the introduction to all the good fortune that had attended me since; and it may be supposed that we were mutually pleased at meeting; though, from our constant correspondence, our minds had never been separated. Nevertheless he came, he said, to lecture and blame me for what I had recently done.

"No doubt," observed he, "the world praises you; and your own heart, and your mistress's heart; but I trust I need not tell you that these are all self-deceits, and must not be allowed to overthrow the plain line of your religious duty. To be a chivalrous knight is a fine thing; to be a Christian is a finer. Nevertheless, I come not to preach, and own that my joy at your safety, from what I must more than ever think a

ruffian, made me forget your breach of duty ; and though I cannot praise, I am delighted to congratulate you."

At these words he again pressed my hand, and I felt both his blame and his affection as I ought.

"But, now, said he, "as I have but a minute, and I have heard from Lord Castleton of the high career you have opened to yourself (thanks, you know, to your rusty tutor, who first directed your attention to it), pray tell me whether you still 'sigh and lament you in vain,' or whether you have taken advantage of the absence of a certain Prince Darling, by taking his place?"

I was astonished at what I thought this affectation of playfulness, so unusual in my sage tutor, to whom indeed I had related all the perplexities the prince had caused me, but had no thought he would thus treat them. Seeing me, therefore, look grave, he resumed his own gravity, and in another tone said,

"Be assured, I meant not to hurt you by my question, which you may suppose was prompted only by my old interest, and as I once strenuously opposed what it was madness in your then situation to encourage, so, after such admirable constancy, I see no reason, now your position is changed, why you should nurse your affection at a distance ;—two things always provided—that Miss Hastings and the prince are not engaged as to heart or hand, and that your own heart tells you you have a prospect of success."

"Alas !" said I, much struck with this counsel, "will you not think me the same rash, inconsiderate person you used to do, when I tell you I know little as to your first proviso, and nothing at all as to the last ? But allow me to express my surprise. What is become of all your strong opinions on the subject of *mesalliance* ? Are they changed ? and do you at last think that if love be mutual, which, God knows (and mock me not for an upstart fool when I confess it), I have here no reason to imagine, a marriage may really be happy, though the condition of the parties is unequal ?"

"Think not," answered he, assuming something of the old tutor, "that I am so light in forming or renouncing an opinion. It is not *my* mind, but *your* situation, that is changed. This makes all the difference, if a greater indeed is not superadded to it in the changed fortunes of Miss Hastings, who is no lon-

ger, I am told by Lord Castleton himself, the great heiress she was."

"Lord Castleton!—did he speak of this? I never knew that he took any interest in the family, except, perhaps, for the sake of his niece, Lady Hungerford, whom he almost adores, and who herself adores Miss Hastings."

"Exactly so. It was this, and the interest he takes in you, that made him talk, not merely on the subject of the Hastings' losses, but of your feelings about the family—too plain, he said (especially since the duel), had he even not gathered it from Lady Hungerford, to be misunderstood. But this is not all."

Here Fothergill paused.

"For heaven's sake," cried I, "leave me not on tenter-hooks. Proceed."

"I think I may venture," continued he; "and, indeed, it was Lord Castleton's suggestions that alone made me broach this conversation as I did, so as I fear to hurt you. He certainly did say, that provided the riddle of Prince Acolphus's pretensions could be cleared up, and Miss Hastings could be favourable to a seven years' constancy, he saw nothing in your situation, and particularly in your farther prospects, that ought to prevent her family from listening to your suit. Nay, he added, that upon that last point—that is, as to your fortune and situation in the world—Lady Hungerford agreed with him, but declared that, from causes which, as she did not explain them, he did not venture to inquire into, the thing was impossible. This was on her last hasty visit to town, since which she has been silent, and Lord Castleton would have continued so too, had not your contest with Lord Albany revised the subject."

"Lord Castleton," observed I, much pleased, "is a great authority upon any subject, and what he says of my situation, as to circumstances, is encouraging. But, alas! he can know little of Bertha's heart, unless from Lady Hungerford; and there, I own, I have no hope, as that lady has persisted to the last in desiring me not to encourage it, from any thing favourable in her power to communicate."

"And yet," replied Fothergill, "unless really engrossed by her cousin, there is a great deal in what Lord Castleton observed upon it."

"For heaven's sake, what?"

"Why, when I called, I found that, after some hours work, he was unbending at luncheon, with a volume of Marmontel before him, which he says he is still fond of, for the pleasure it gave him in his youth. The tale was the *Heureux Divorce*, in which, you know, there was something like your adventure with Lord Albany. At least Blainze (though so far unlike Albany, that he was rather a coxcomb than a brute) insults the character of the heroine, vouching facts for it, which Clairfons, one of her admirers, disbelieves, and casts the lie in his teeth. They fight: Blainze is nearly killed, and Clairfons wounded."

"What is the inference?" asked I.

"What Lord Castleton pointed out from the book, when we afterwards fell upon your subject:—'*Une femme se defend mal contre un homme qui la defend si bien*'—implying (still, however, upon the supposition that the prince is not in the way), that the risk you ran for her sake would go far with Miss Hastings in your favour, should you address her."

Here the teasing man looked at his watch, and saying he would be too late for an engagement at Lambeth, most provokingly left me, when I most wanted to consult him.

What could all this mean? Fothergill, the impregnable, persevering, unchanging Fothergill, who had for so many years been endeavouring to root out this deep-seated attachment; who had almost told me to despair and die, rather than hope, much less seek success; now, as it were, to enlist on the opposite side, and preach a total change; backed, too, as he said, by Lord Castleton himself, who had yet never seemed to take the least interest, or even to be acquainted with the affair!

Surely I was born to be the sport of mystery, pursued as I was by such contending representations as appeared between this last, and those I had so lately received both from Granville and Lady Hungerford, particularly the latter.

The time, however, approached when I thought I should at least put the matter out of doubt; for I felt that, once again at Foljambe Park it would not be easy to disguise the real position of the cousins together, nor difficult to discover from both Mr. Hastings and Bertha how far I was, or was not, in the situation of a proscribed man.

With this persuasion, I began with fear and trembling to prepare for my visit. It was, however, retarded several days by a most mournful event, and as unexpected as mournful, which filled me with distress, and, at first, with disabling grief. The reader will believe this when I inform him it was the sudden death of the excellent Manners. I call it sudden, though his preceding illness lasted some days, at first without any apprehension of danger; for it was only for the last twelve hours that any very great fear for him was entertained. His hale and green old age (for he was little more than sixty), his sound constitution, and still more, his calm and philosophic spirit, gave any expectation but of a sudden removal. But he fell a victim to what has cut off stronger men than himself. It seems, in one of his perambulations, he was overtaken, on a shelterless moor, by a thunder-storm, which drenched him in a moment; and yet, notwithstanding his prudence, he continued for hours in his wet clothes. The consequence was, cold, fever, and inflammation of the chest, which, on the fifth day, deprived the world of one of the best of its inhabitants.

Well may I think him so, and heaven knows how all my other anxieties merged in the great one of his loss, which totally unfitted me for the excursion proposed, while for several days it actually deprived me of the interest, absorbing as it had been, which had belonged to it.

The event happened at Bardolfe, where he was so interested in the fitting up the lodging he had proposed for himself, that he remained two whole months, and had there received the account of my collision with Lord Albany. I know not whether that had any influence in his after procedure, or whether from the warmth of his impulses he had before resolved upon it; but it was after the rencontre, that he annexed a codicil to his will, by which he realized the sort of romantic wish he had conceived, of making me owner of Bardolfe Castle, by bequeathing me that loved old place, and the estate belonging to it.

But what shall I say to the will itself, and what will the reader think of my prosperous fortune, when he learns that my munificent benefactor, having really no near heirs (for his heir at law was most remote, and not personally known to him), had bequeathed the Grange and the estate annexed to

it (about £1,200 a year) to his new-found and highly-favoured kinsman? The Baddlesinere property, full £4,000 a-year. which came by his mother, he had, with the justice belonging to him, left to his mother's heir at law.

This immediately occasioned a vast alteration in my prospects of every kind, and Lord Castleton particularly congratulated me upon them, though he felt as much as myself for the loss of a friend, who he said (and truly) did honour to human nature.

The event, I was told, would require my almost immediate attendance both at the Grange and in the north. I passed two days at the first, and would have been impatient to proceed to the last, but was too much interested to fulfil my engagement at Foljambe, not to postpone it till after the nuptials. Meantime that journey lay every mile of it in the way, and after apprizing Granville of these additional smiles of fortune, I set out, with what feelings may be imagined.

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## CHAPTER XX.

MY THIRD VISIT TO FOLJAMBE PARK, AND RECEPTION THERE BY MR. HASTINGS AND BERTHA.—I RESOLVE TO PUT THE QUESTION OF PRINCE ADOLPHUS OUT OF DOUBT.

My heart is great, but it must break with silence  
Ere't be disburthen'd with a liberal tongue.  
Nay, speak thy mind.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Richard II.*

My heart beat high as, for the third time in my life, I drove through the well known gates of Foljambe. I seemed to recognise every tree which formed the avenue leading up to the house. What scenes, what vicissitudes, struggles, resolutions, formed and broken in a moment! What new ideas, people, and pursuits, had engaged me, since,

“ Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,”

I last passed through these gates, as I thought, never to return !

The sickening feeling of that desolate morning, when I was virtually dismissed by Bertha from her acquaintance, was still so strong in my remembrance, that I actually felt the same sensations now, though recalled in so distinguished a manner.

Yet, did I owe my recal to Bertha herself, or only to the favour of her nearest relation and the most beloved of her friends ?

This was a question which I did not like to answer. But, at any rate, I did not return the poor, unprovided Sedburgh adventurer, the comparative outcast, who knew not where to lay his head, yet dared to hug a hopeless passion to his heart, preferring its object, with despair, to any other with the certainty of success. I surveyed my neat travelling carriage with complacency, and thought of my Norman extraction with more unction than ever, especially when I remembered Mr. Hastings' little ebullition in the moment of his gratitude, that his ancestors and mine had both fought on the same side.

So far so good. But how did this effect the main point ? Was either the hand or heart of Bertha free ? Or, if both were so, what reason had I to hope success ? What favour had she ever shewn me, beyond the disclosure of the cheerful feelings of a *naïve* and free-hearted girl, in all the openness of sweet fifteen, which had never been taught disguise ? After that time, though kind, because alive to kindness shewn to her in hours of great tribulation, what sign was there of encouragement to hope for affection ? On the contrary, a most determined and well-sustained resolution to let me depart for ever, the moment she discovered my feelings for her, without a sign that they were partaken ; to say nothing of the mysterious and brilliant rival, who, whether beloved or not, must, if report said true, have occupied all, or very much of her interest, perhaps of her heart.

These were reflections as sad as they were obvious ; and yet, strange to say, had never presented themselves to me in such force as at this moment, when not only were they least welcome, but when it was of most importance that they should all be forgotten. But thus it is with our poor nature : what we might look upon as friendly beacons, we labour to forget or destroy ; and when in a disposition to be directed by them, it is almost always too late.

Will it be believed, that the recollections I have described got such hold of me as I advanced to the scene of action, that I actually debated whether I could not turn back,—when I beheld Granville and Lady Hungerford coming down the avenue to meet me? There was at best no hope now of escaping, and I prepared to greet them as I ought.

I was soon out of my chaise, and the hearty and joyous welcome they gave me dissipated the cloudy thoughts with which I had entered these once happy precincts. Their walk, the air, and no doubt their blissful situation, threw such looks of delight about them, that they both seemed particularly handsome, and I could have eyed them askance for envy, as the devil did our first parents, but that I loved them—ay, as much as the devil hated Adam and Eve.

It is very certain I never saw Lady Hungerford with such feelings of admiration and interest. An approaching marriage, thought I, is a great heightener of beauty; and she certainly appeared more beautiful, as well as more gracious, than ever. For, though she was now some two or three and thirty years old, and had consequently lost the bloom of girlhood, she had not lost that look of ingenuousness which contributes so much to render girlhood enchanting. On the other hand, she had not parted with a shape that was perfect, and a grace that was all her own; in short, to use her favourite word, that *tournure*, in which, I should say, she was as inimitable as irresistible.

My first inquiry was after Mr. Hastings. He was well.

“And Miss Hastings?”

“Well; but too seldom quits her father to come with us. You will see her at dinner.”

“Not before?” said I, looking at my watch.

Granville and Lady Hungerford smiled with one another, yet I thought good-humouredly, though I own I felt mortified. “She deposes her friends to receive me,” said I to myself. “Would she have done so had it been the prince?” I did not like the omen.

Whither I looked blank and unhappy I don’t know, but I suppose I did; for Lady Hungerford immediately said, playfully and yet earnestly.

“Lord De Clifford must mind and behave well, or I shall repent having got leave to ask him to this solemnity; for pray



observe, it was my doing, and not this gentleman's ; so you are my guest."

"And had the family I am come to visit no share in it?" asked I. "I at least hoped it had been a joint invitation."

"Your wish was father to this, it seems," replied the lady ; "and if that will satisfy you, it must be owned they fell willingly into the proposal. Still the proposal was mine?"

I bowed ; but own I felt a little disappointed.

We had by this time reached the house, or rather the stable-yard, in which a side door opened into the mansion ; we having, by I know not what inadvertency, taken that road to it. I mention it, however, only to note the impression it made on me, in comparing it with former times. Instead of four or five stable-people, whom I had remembered always busy about the carriages and horses, one solitary groom was occupied with a low park chair ; and instead of six superb coach-horses, and carriages of different sorts, the stables and houses, which were all open, exhibited but one pony, a riding-horse, and a post-chariot, shrouded up in a canvass cover, as if seldom used.

The thought immediately crossed me (and it made me melancholy) that Mr. Hastings, from his losses, had been thus forced to reduce his establishment. At the the same time I cannot deny that, as far as *I* was concerned, there was something not disagreeable in it, as bringing me more upon a level with him ; while the recollection of Granville's account of the sweet Bertha's resignation to her altered prospects gave a glance of sunshine to my mind, and only made me more anxious to see and love her for it.

On entering the house there was the same diminution of consequence. In lieu of two footmen covered with livery lace, who used generally to perambulate the hall, and give notice of visitors to a groom of the chambers, there was neither footman nor groom of the chambers to be seen, but Granville leading the way into the well-known music-room, we took our stations there without any harbinger. Here we remained in chat till Lady Hungerford said she would go to Bertha's sitting-room, and Granville went out to announce my arrival to his uncle.

Left alone, the solitude of the house, compared to what I had remembered it, was the the first thing that struck me ;

and I then examined, and recognised, with something like melancholy, many of the gay pieces of furniture, the instruments and pictures which had inspired my inexperienced boyhood with such awe, on my first visit, full seven years before.

But my eyes were soon arrested by an accession to the pictures, which there was no mistaking—Prince Adolphus himself, in full uniform; somewhat different, because rather more manly from being a little older, and handsomer, than the engraving which had so fixed me in the summer-house. It seemed to have been recently done; was evidently a foreign portrait; and I concluded had been just hung in the place of honour which it occupied—over the chimney.

Shall I own that, however unreasonably, my heart sickened with jealousy. The fact spoke volumes, and effectually overthrew all the surmises and inferences arising from the accounts of my inaccurate and ill-informed friends, as I thought them (perhaps with some spleen), when they talked of his departure, not to return. Even his own denial of his engagement, to the queen, seemed clearly now a disguise of the truth, or a mistake of Lord Castleton's who related it to me. Any way, I thought myself the sport of circumstances. The indifference which was to keep Bertha from her old friend, till dinner-time, was perfectly accounted for, and I lamented, with some *hauteur*, that I had taken so long a journey to visit a person not her own mistress.

In these reflections I passed many minutes far from pleasantly, and was angry with my host for leaving me so long,—when I beheld at a distance, in the flower-garden, the two ladies walking in earnest conversation.

For a moment my anger, jealousy, melancholy (call it what you will), fled like a summer cloud. I had only eyes, and certainly only heart for Bertha. I would not believe a word of the engagement; the picture might have been a mere *offrande* from the prince to his uncle; the prince could not have been guilty of deceiving the queen; and my dear good friends, could not have been misinformed.

What to do—whether to join them unasked, or wait till I was invited, was the question,—when Granville, joining the party, suddenly diverged into the plantation walk, carrying his mistress along with him, and leaving mine alone.

In a thousand minds what to do, I watched her movements, which were to her favourite garden-room—the summer-house—and sallying out, I resolved, if possible, to accost her there. As I approached it, I felt strangely perturbed, both from present intentions and former recollections; for it seemed but yesterday that I had parted from her on that very spot, with what feelings of mortification may be remembered. Were they now more happy? Less mortified, certainly, but whether more hopeful remained as much as ever in doubt.

The door of the summer-house faced a long walk of honeysuckle, syringas, and lilacs, forming a bower of sweets, and, hearing footsteps, Bertha came to the room door, fancying it, as she afterwards said, her friends rejoining her. What were my own feelings when, on discovering who it was, she started and turned pale, and, in a hurried manner, closed a book she had been reading, and which she still held in one hand. However, she very frankly gave me the other, and though her eye, at first, seemed to avoid mine, she said, with that softness of voice, which no one ever possessed but herself,

“Oh, Mr. De Clifford, how rude you must have thought me not to have immediately appeared to welcome you on your arrival, particularly (and here she a little faltered) after all you have done for us. Good heavens! what might not your friendship have cost you!”

Here, though her eye was still averted, she allowed me still to retain her hand, while I said, with the emotion I felt,

“Pray mention it not; for believe, that to find you do not disapprove, or hate me for my officiousness, makes this event the proudest and happiest of my life.”

“Hate you! Mr Clifford,” said she (here, at last, raising her dark and speaking eyes, which seemed to glisten as she spoke)—“hate you for protecting the unprotected? and whom you had so little reason to care for.”

At these words the book she had still held dropt from her disengaged hand, and from its well-known and pretty binding, I saw it was the Gresset, which in happier days she had given me, and I had perhaps churlishly, returned.

A slight gleam tinged her cheek when she saw I had perceived it, but she continued the strain she had begun.

“If you knew,” said she, “the affliction, the terror, which the news of your danger for our sakes gave us, you would

not use such words. For, though I see you safe, I cannot help even now shuddering, as I always have, at the thought of—that cruel man.”

Here she trembled so violently as to leave no doubt, had I been disposed to it, as to the sincerity of her assertion. Recovering, she went on.

“I do trust Lady Hungerford and my cousin Granville conveyed to you, in part at least, what my poor father and I felt of gratitude for your noble conduct, and how thankful we were that you were preserved.”

“Be assured,” I replied, “my dear Miss Hastings” (and I was most sincere when I said it), “to be rewarded with such sweet words would not only make me cheerfully risk, but lose my life in such a cause.”

“I cannot thank you,” said she, agitated and trembling still more, as she almost fell into a chair—and the two or three minutes’ silence which ensued, while she hid her face in her hand, spoke more eloquent thanks than all language could have supplied.

I know not what I was able to think of this—certainly it shewed any thing but indifference, anything but want of gratitude; but not only this might be the mere ebullition of a feeling heart, alive to what it esteemed a most important service, and therefore not incompatible with pre-engaged affections; but as she rose from her chair, and her eye encountered the memorable engraving of her cousin, still in its place, she gave an involuntary, but very audible sigh, and sat down again, much moved.

I was not less so myself, and a silence of some moments ensued, in which I seemed under a cloud of contending ideas. At last, looking round the room, I said, though with hesitation,

“When I recollect, what indeed I have never for one moment forgotten, the misery and convulsion of heart I felt the last time I was in this place, how little likely did it seem that I should ever see it or you again, all I can say is, that I am grateful to you for admitting me to it once more; although I fear apology is necessary for having intruded myself upon you, especially as I see it is a sacred spot, marked for privacy, and which, if only for containing that striking resemblance of your princely cousin, it would be profane to violate. The

nterest I had, and always shall have in it, induced me to direct my steps hither; but be assured, dear Miss Hastings, it is a liberty I will not repeat; and only let me add, if I do not offend by alluding to reports so intimately concerning your happiness, that you have not a friend on earth who is more anxious for that happiness than myself."

The ingenuous, and perhaps too sensitive girl was evidently affected with this address, though the effect of it, from the expression of her countenance, I could not exactly collect. Her cheek became much suffused—her eye cast down—she again sighed—and at length, as I thought, looked so displeased, that I could not help exclaiming,

"I am most unfortunate; for it is absolutely unaccountable that the man who respects you most of anything under heaven should be even able to offend you. If you knew my concern at it, you would I am sure forgive me, for I would rather die than displease you by impertinent allusions, and dearly shall I pay for the, I fear, unwarrantable freedom I have taken."

At these words, seeing that she remained in a sort of immoveable abstraction, which I did not know how to construe, I hastily left the summer-house, and returned to the hall.

Mr. Hastings, who I found had been asleep when I arrived, which had given his daughter an opportunity to walk out with Lady Hungerford, was not yet visible, and I was again left alone, much to my content, for I wanted leisure to revolve all that had just passed. But, except that Bertha, in point of person and manner, was more sweet and attractive than ever (indeed she was now in the full zenith of her charms), I could come to no positive conclusion on what I had seen and heard, in regard to her cousin, though it was evident he was anything but indifferent to her. The sigh on encountering his portrait, and her apparent displeasure at my allusion to her situation with him (though, had she refused him, they might have been thought not inconsistent with that circumstance), made me think her being thus affected could only arise from her concern that they should be separated. Her emotion in expressing her thanks to me, and her interest for my safety, I thought only natural in so soft a mind, and I augured absolutely nothing more from them.

Such was the result of my self-examination, which I had

no pleasure in continuing, when the butler brought me word that Mr. Hastings would be glad to see me.

I found him still reposing upon his sofa, and in truth exhibiting the signs of a person who had been at the brink of death. Yet he had still that high-bred air of a man of birth and good company, of which his recent illness, any more than his retired life, could not deprive him.

Bertha, who had returned, was sitting by him, and exhibited an appearance totally the reverse of what she had been not half-an-hour before. She was cheerful, and even gay, complimenting her father upon the good looks which their little airing in the pony-chair had given him, and herself on her skill in driving him.

He welcomed me more warmly than he had ever done before, and was going profusely into thanks for the zeal I had shewn for him and his house, when, with some difficulty, I stopt him, telling him I had already been more than rewarded by what Miss Hastings had been so good as to say. Upon which, putting again his white hand into mine, he shook me with it, and kindly fixing his eyes on me, observed,

"All I can say is, you are a brave man, and prove how impossible it is for one who has a gentleman's blood in him ever to forget that he is a gentleman."

This speech, pleasant in itself, was made ten times more so by my observing, what no vanity could make me mistake—the conscious pleasure it occasioned in his daughter, as if her own mind echoed the sentiment, and approved its application. Her look was downcast when it met mine upon it, but conveyed any thing but the constraint and displeasure I thought I had so recently observed. I had a thousand busy notions upon it, and again thanked Lord Albany for an outrage which had produced me such a reception from those whose favour was of the last importance to my happiness.

The conversation, however, now changed, and Mr. Hastings, assuming a graver air, observed,

"You are in mourning, I see, and well you may be; for, from all accounts, you have lost a friend not easily replaced; judging from his letters to me, a gentlemanly man, and of an exceeding pure old Norman family. What he has done for you is inestimable, for the king himself cannot re-seat a well-descended gentleman in the identical castle of his ancestors,

and you may be proud that, though the considerate kindness of this excellent person, there is revived in you a Bardolfe of Bardolfe, for such you are, though your other name may be still more celebrated."

"It was, I remember, a favourite notion of Mr. Manners," said I, "but I thought only a playful one, as well as the title he sometimes gave me of son. I little thought how soon it would be realized. I owe him, however, far more than the benefit he has conferred upon me in point of fortune; not less than all the prospects I have in the world; and to crown all, I verily believe, the pleasure of being here at this moment."

At these words I fixed my eyes on Bertha, and thought she looked as if she understood me.

"But," continued I, "who could foresee it, when I first, by the merest accident, made Mr. Manners' acquaintance; went home with him to his house, and only found, by that chance, that he was my kinsman? It was absolute romance."

"And yet that is no wonder," said Bertha, smiling at the recollection; "for Mr. De Clifford cannot have forgotten the prophecy of poor Mademoiselle La Porte, who, even in those days of pupillage, foretold that he would become *un héros de Roman*."\*

I well remembered that prophecy, and how it turned my head at the time, and was going to observe upon it, when the entrance of Granville and Lady Hungerford, returned from their walk, put an end to this part of the conversation, though I felt a secret joy at the proof thus given by Bertha that the happy days of old were not entirely forgotten; and I began almost to think myself mistaken, at least as to her feelings of displeasure against me, whatever might be her thoughts of the prince, when looking at his portrait.

At dinner Bertha was equally gay. The daily progress of her father; her usefulness to him; his delight in *her*; and *her's* in the approaching happiness of her best friends;—all contributed to give a freedom to her deportment and conversation which I had not witnessed since the days of Mademoiselle's prophecy concerning myself; and, towards myself, there was no longer any constraint, so that she would have been more and more irresistible, but for the incubus, as

\* See Vol. I.

I may call it, of her cousin, which still haunted and pressed me down with a weight which I could not shake off. Yet our evening concluded with music, in which the harp of Bertha, the piano of Lady Hungerford, and the voices of both, did beautiful justice to the airs and rich accompaniments of Sacchini and Bach.

But Oh! the prince! the prince! Was there no way of clearing up this eternal riddle? Was Bertha's present cheerfulness the result of happy security, certain of being gratified at a given time? and had my friends, after all, and with all their caution, got leave to invite me to a banquet mixed with poison? If so, this pleasing scene could only renew feelings in a ten-fold degree, from which, one of them for months, and another for years, had been doing every thing possible to wean me.

No; was now finally determined, and resolved that this uncertainty should not last another unnecessary hour.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

I HAVE VERY DECISIVE CONFERENCES WITH GRANVILLE, AND OBTAIN THE FACT OF BERTHA'S SITUATION IN RESPECT TO HER ENGAGEMENT, BUT NOT AS TO HER AFFECTIONS.

But as thou art a prince, I fear thee,  
As I fear the roaring of a lion's whelp.

SHAKESPEARE.—1 *Henry IV.*

THE next day, in consequence of my resolve, I took Granville to a seat under a wide-spreading oak in the park, at a distance from the house, and had a full and free expostulation with him. To do him justice, whether his own heart was too happy to trifle with mine, or his sense of justice was concerned, he seemed far more frank and friendly to my views than he had been, so far at least as they required that the question as to the prince should be set at rest. At the same time he desired me to mark emphatically that he pre-



tended to know nothing of what had been Bertha's feelings towards her cousin, or what they were towards *any one else*. He allowed that there had been a great mystery in regard to the prince, which Lady Hungerford agreed with him, when they invited me to the park, perhaps knowing the state of my heart, they ought to be prepared to unravel; but they were restrained by duty to Bertha, whose secrets they had no right to reveal, and whose delicacy they were bound to respect.

"Heaven forbid," said I, "that it should ever be violated by any wish of mine; but I put it to your's and Lady Hungerford's justice to say how far you have been consistent with all your former caution, when, keeping me from all hope of finding her free, or rather from all knowledge whatever of her situation, and knowing every feeling of my own heart, you invited me once more to encounter the danger of her presence?"

He looked convinced, or rather convicted.

"To tell you the truth," said he, "both Lady Hungerford and myself feel that we have plunged you, ourselves, and Bertha too, into a dilemma, from which it is difficult to escape; and our only excuse is in the joy we felt at your noble conduct, your safety after it, and our wish that so true a friend should witness our own approaching happiness.

For Honora and myself, we see no reason why you should not know the exact position in which Bertha and her cousin stand together; but the disclosure of it, without asking permission, would be to betray confidence; and to ask permission might and would cruelly alarm her. You yourself protest against hurting a delicacy hitherto as white as snow, in defence of which, too, you have shewn yourself so dauntless a champion. Would you press us to do this?"

"Certainly not; but how do you shew me that to reveal her exact position, merely as to her being free, or not free, would affect a delicacy as dear to me as to you or Lady Hungerford?"

"Can we, ought we," replied he, "to do more than she would do herself?"

"Perhaps not."

"Well then, if free, would it not be advertising for an offer, if she were voluntarily to tell you so? If engaged, would it not be arrogating the notion that your attachment to her con-

tinues, if she apprized you of her state, in mere mercy to yours?"

"Her modesty," said I, "forbids both suppositions."

"There is but one way, then," answered he, "to get at the truth, without compromising our honour or her dignity, and that probably you are not prepared to pursue."

"Name it, and let me judge."

"Ask her, herself."

"Would not that be making her a conditional offer?"

"It would."

"Yet you know not her mind towards me."

"I do not."

"Then thus it stands. If I ask, and she tells me her heart is not her own, I may have the *benefit* and *pleasure* of knowing it. If free, I may gain — what? Her hand? No; but permission to court it, subject, after all, to rejection. But as I am yet any thing but in possession of a return of affection, I must proceed in uncertainty, and may not succeed after all. This will never do."

"I feared so," said Granville; and here we both paused.

At length he continued, "Were Prince Adolphus out of the question, let me ask, what would be your conduct?"

"Thinking her free, I might address her like any other; but like any other, I should be guided by my own discretion, when to think myself in a situation to hope for success before I proposed. Here my very question as to her freedom makes the proposal, and I have no discretion at all."

"If by any other means, then, you knew she was free, you would propose?"

"Not quite so. I would, as I have said, only in the first instance make experiments, and exercise my judgment as to the chance of success."

"I understand you," said Granville, thoughtfully; "you are at least reasonable. I have told you, and I repeat, that I know not how you stand with Bertha. And whatever your hopes, on a regular trial, and however prosperously changed your situation, it cannot be expected that she will surrender on a twenty-four hours' siege, even if the handsome and amiable German have no place in her heart."

I wished the German at the devil, when Granville said this.

"But the question is, whether you will commence that siege, to decide which, you desire, as you have a right to do, information. I have already told you my difficulty, which you have received most like a gentleman. I now so far relax in my answer, as to ask for time. Meet me here two hours hence, and you shall hear further."

I concluded he wished to consult his betrothed, and told him so. He said nothing, but walked away, leaving me on thorns.

To get rid of them, I returned to the house, where, instead of his being closeted with Lady Hungerford, I found him knocking the balls about, rather than playing at billiards, with Bertha, both of them in the most lackadaisical manner—Bertha waiting to be summoned by her father, after he should have finished dressing; Granville, as I found, to be joined by his mistress, bonneted and cloaked for a walk.

This induced me to ask permission to take his place at table, which was granted with alacrity; for the lady was in high glee at the further improvement of her parent, who had had an excellent night, which he had been pleased to say was owing to my visit having done him good.

"The least I can do for you in return," said Bertha, "is to let you beat me at billiards; for as you are not occupied with something else, like cousin Granville, whom I now always beat, I suppose that will be my fate."

"My mind," said I, "will certainly not be absent from the table;"—and we began; but the lady not only beat me hollow, but seemed to enjoy her victory with even exuberant spirits.

This is any thing but being in love, thought I; yet, afterwards, I retracted, and thought high spirits a proof of a lover's happiness.

A message from papa prevented a second game, and I prepared to sally out to attend my engagement with Granville.

In my state of feeling, every incident is of consequence, and while I previously took a turn in the music-room, rapt in thought, I was roused by the entrance of my old friend, Mrs. Margaret. She was a lady not used to stand upon forms, so accosted me at once with,

"Lord! Sir, I have been watching all yesterday and to-day, to say how glad we are to see you; and they say you are

looking so much better than you used, which indeed I see ; and you are grown such a grand gentleman, and a rich, and in Parliament ; and I suppose we shall have no more wanderings at night—though, for that matter, the poachers have left off coming here. Ah ! Sir, I shall never forget it.”

“ Nor I neither, dear Mrs. Margaret,” said I, seeing her rather out of breath.

“ Well now,” continued she ; “ only think !—*dear Mrs. Margaret !* as if it was seven years ago when you were such a very young gentleman, and Miss Bertha such a little lady. But it proves what I always say, like my good master, a gentleman’s a gentleman all the world over, and never forgets he is a gentleman. Ah ! Sir, we have had many chops and changes since them days.”

“ And since I was last here, too, Mrs. Margaret,” observed I ; “ when you were so good to my broken head.”

“ O ! that was all along of Miss Bertha,” replied the *soubrette* ; but I was rather caught at this, she dashed it down again by saying, “ Indeed, as to that, she would have been just the same had it been one of the footmen.”

“ She is always good,” said I, and I could not help looking at the large painting of the prince over the chimney-piece.

“ Ah !” cried Margaret, observing it ; “ that is one of the changes I talked of. That was not here when you was here. A fine man that ; don’t you think so, Sir ? He brought it over with him from Germany, they say at master’s desire, and gave it to him or Miss Bertha, I don’t know which.”

I never longed so much to ask a few questions of any one as I did then of Mrs. Margaret ; but repressed my curiosity as unseemly, with hope, however, that she would go on of herself, in which I was not disappointed.

“ Now,” said she, conning the picture again, “ I cannot see what there is in them there foreigners which they say is to beat our English. I say an Englishman for my money, even though *he* be a prince. And so I said once to my young lady, as I was undressing her one night. ‘ Ma’am,’ said I—but here pausing, and going on in a whisper, she added, “ I suppose you know the prince came over to marry Miss Bertha, and perhaps is to do so still ?”

"*Perhaps do so still!*" exclaimed I; "I thought it was certain."

But I checked myself, though I fear my countenance told tales to the sagacious Margaret, who indeed had never forgotten former discoveries.

"Why," observed she (lowering her voice still more), "we never could make that exactly out; and when he first came he seemed shy, and any thing but a lover, and that's what made me say an Englishman was worth twenty Germans, though to be sure the prince was vastly handsome. However, said I one night, 'Ma'am,' said I, 'though we all guess what his highness (we all called him his highness) is come for, I don't think he is gay enough for a young English lady. Why, Sir Harry Melford was much livelier, and Mr. Granville, and even Mr. Clifford,' meaning you, Sir, begging pardon; but all of a sudden, mistress turned excessive red, and never was so angry with me in her life—nay, she never was angry with me before. 'Margaret,' said she, 'you take great liberties with the prince and me, and all the gentlemen you have named, and I charge you never to name any of them again, particularly Mr. Clifford;' meaning you again, Sir, though I am sure I don't know why; for the day as you went away (I am sure I remember it as if it were yesterday), she was shut up all day, and never held up her head for two days after. Indeed, to be sure, she was very ill; and master, he was in such a fuss, and sent for Mr. Sandford, and a packet came from Germany, and that always made all the family grave.—But, Lord bless me! there is my young lady's bell, and she be a-going to drive master out. I hope, Sir, you will not say any thing of this gallimaufry\* of mine, which perhaps is very wrong of me, because servants, you know, are servants, and should never talk of the secrets of families; but I was so glad to see you, and know you so like to hear any thing about Miss Bertha, that I could not help it."

Here the bell ringing again, she hurried out of the room, leaving me astounded at her volubility, and not a little at a loss to understand her exact meaning.

I had no time to analyze it; for the two hours had ex-

\* Gallimaufry is old English for a hotch-potch; and I suppose, by this specimen of Mrs. Margaret's, is used still by the lower orders in Yorkshire.

pired, and I hastened to the trysting tree, where I found Granville waiting for me.

He began immediately on the expected subject.

"You judged rightly," said he, "that I wished to consult Lady Hungerford. Not only is she a party concerned, but a woman understands a woman's case better than a man; and, of all women, you will not be surprised if I value the judgment of this dear and high-minded lady the most in the world."

"With me," said I, "that needs no proof; but what's the result?"

"Favourable," replied he, "to your wishes, as far as I know, or could answer for their extent. For when I told her that you had assured me you only desired to be informed of the position between Bertha and her cousin, in order to take your resolution, either ultimately to propose to her if free, or abandon the pursuit if engaged, adding the consideration of your augmented fortune, she said she was sure Mr. Hastings himself would think you a proper match for his daughter, and when she considered this, she——"

"Well?"

"She thought the difficulty of answering was at an end; for, far from compromising either confidence or delicacy in revealing a mere fact, which Mr. Hastings himself would be bound to reveal were you to apply to him, as a friend to you both, it was our duty, she said, to give you information upon which a measure so important to you both was to be founded."

"Perfectly well reasoned," said I, "and worthy the right-minded woman who so decided."

"Observe, however," added Granville, "that we confine this to the disclosure of the mere fact, that the engagement is at an end; a disclosure which Bertha's own interest would require, and her father would wish, though their dignity might take no measures of themselves to reveal it. But farther than this, and especially as to any thing concerning the state of her heart towards the prince, or any one else, I beg you to believe me when I say, I know nothing."

"Not even the cause of the conclusion of the engagement?"

"Of that no more than the fact, that, in consequence of some very painful explanations on the part of Prince Adol-

phus to Bertha and her father, the agreement was cancelled by mutual consent."

"*Mutual consent!* Bertha's consent!" exclaimed I, in perturbation. "It appears, then, that the rupture was by the prince, and that *her* heart was in the match, though *his* was not."

My agitation moved Granville, who with kindness said,

"I see your distress, and know all your feelings upon it. And yet, though I am not in a situation to refute it, I am not prepared to *agree* in your conclusion that her heart was in the match. But, as I have told you, I am not sufficiently informed; Honora alone is in possession of the real facts of the case, detailed to her in letters from Bertha herself; which letters she could not shew even to *me*, much less to *you*, without a breach of confidence. All that I myself know is, that my cousin is now free both in hand and heart; but whether at all, or how far, that heart was ever affected by her handsome kinsman, is known only to Honora, who, of course, cannot disclose it."

"Alas!" said I, "without that disclosure, it is too clear what she thinks of it; for I now recollect (indeed have never forgotten) that in the letter she wrote to me at Calais, kind as it was, and though the engagement must then have been cancelled, for the prince had then returned to Germany, and she described the warmest interest taken by Bertha in my fate, she was as solemn and decisive as ever in warning me against a particle of hope on that account. How could this be—the contract broken, and the prince departed—if, spite of the rupture, he had not carried that jewel, her heart, away with him?"

"Do not be ingenious," said Granville, "in tormenting yourself; for though I know not more of Bertha's feelings than I have told you, certainly I can depose that it was not a conviction of her attachment to her cousin that prompted Lady Hungerford's advice to you. It arose purely and sheerly from the fear that the warm description of Bertha's gratitude, which truth drew from her, should not operate upon your too sanguine temper to bring you into danger; danger, if Bertha, who never had (indeed from her engagement never could have) indicated a return of your affection, should not be favourable. I saw Lady Hungerford's letter, and was even

consulted upon it, and can assure you the reason I have assigned was the only one that prompted that part of it which terrifies you. Still I am in no condition to unveil the real heart of Bertha in regard to her cousin, which, if even known to Honora, is locked up in the letters I have mentioned, as if hermetically sealed."

I was bewildered with this sort of half-information, but with which, such was my love, I was willing to be content until I might gather fuller intelligence from these interesting letters; and as I afterwards was favoured with them without any breach of confidence, that my reader may not feel trifled with, but understand the action of my story with more satisfaction, I think it better to present them to him at once;—promising to explain, in its proper place, how they came into my possession.

They consist of a series of epistles to her darling friend, and almost mother, describing her situation with the prince on his arrival at the Park, in the capacity of her betrothed, which had, it seems, belonged to them both ever since the dying request of her mother, the princess, and a consequent arrangement with the duke, his father, had invested them, almost unknown to themselves, with that character.

All but one of these letters had been written just about the time of my last conversation with Lady Hungerford, which as may be remembered, so puzzled me, when she protested against being entangled by words growing out of the difficulties of an embarrassing situation. The last, however, containing an interesting narrative by the prince himself, was received *after* that conversation; indeed it was only delivered to Lady Hungerford on her return to the Park, a day sooner than was expected. This I mention, because, had she seen the narrative before the conversation alluded to, her language to me had possibly been different. With these explanations I set forth the letters in the following chapters.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## LETTERS OF BERTHA TO LADY HUNGERFORD.

How like you the young German,  
The duke of Saxony's nephew?  
SHAKESPEARE.—*Merchant of Venice*

## LETTER I.

“Foljambe Park.

“I WRITE to you, as you desire me, without concealing a thought. Was it necessary to desire me to do so, who never yet concealed one from you? And yet, if ever I could be tempted to be silent towards my best friend, it would be on an occasion where all seems mystery and secret pressure, amounting to almost sadness.

“Far from that ardour and rush of pleasure you supposed, his first address was formality itself. His really fine features, which you know I allowed they were when you admired them in his picture, seemed quite altered, and the sparkle of cheerful frankness which you used to praise, and I tried to think of with more than a cousin's regard, seemed changed into gloom, fearfulness, and suspicion.

“How different this from what I was told to expect, when at sixteen years of age my father announced to me that, at the request of my dying mother, he had betrothed me to my cousin Adolphus, the son, as you know, of Prince Frederick of Saxony, who, my father assured me, was devoted to the alliance.

“I will own, at the time, this cost me bitter pangs, as I had no idea of marriage where there had been no opportunity for mutual knowledge. But my good father assuring me that his honour was pledged, and that if, on acquaintance, I should object, it should not be pursued, I agreed to keep myself disengaged, and, as you know, *strictly fulfilled* that agreement.

“How long has the acquaintance been deferred? Why, I know not; yet now that it has taken place, what have I to notice? The most obsequious duty to my father, and the

most correct politeness to me : no more. These characterize every moment of our meetings ; yet there seems little soul in them ; not that soul which I look for and adore in those I am told I ought to lose, and which I do so adore in you, my dear adviser, sweet pattern, and darling friend. Oh, how differently does his countenance and manner impress me from yours ! And when I reflect that he may be my husband—awful, and sacred name !—all my fears of the disappointment and misery which may attend the dedication of myself to the dying commands of one parent, and the urgent wishes of the other, revive, and I fear I am not more cheerful than himself.

“ And yet he is certainly handsome, and has the *air distingué* which belongs to his rank and profession, and, could he banish the sort of mournfulness which hangs about him, he probably might be all we used to think him in his picture. Then his manner, however cold, is to me most respectful ; surely I ought not to complain, because in a first interview there is some stiffness. A German, too !

“ He addressed me in French, which he speaks fluently, and English, but not so well. My father tried to remember his German, and for a moment there was a smile—not unbecoming ; but all soon relapsed into solemnity, and almost sadness ; and though, by degrees, he began to look at me (for at first he seemed afraid of doing so), it did not enliven him, and what much struck me, several sighs escaped him.

“ What all this means, or what he thinks of me, I know not, and what I think of him becomes a more serious question than ever. But I am resigned, and firm in my resolution, if possible, to conform to my dearest father’s engagement for me to my mother, made, indeed, when I had no power of choice, and was unable even to be consulted, but confirmed afterwards when I had that power, from devotion to a father I adored, and who said his honour, dearer to him than life, was pledged. Alas ?—but retrospect is too late.

“ The character of the prince is amiable and estimable ; and though, under the circumstances, to feel, or profess love at once, is impossible, yet love, as you have often consoled me by saying, may come, and with it happiness. Certainly, in regard to person, there is nothing in my illustrious cousin to forbid it, and then the reflection of the duty I have shewn

my father will only enhance it. After all, I am only in the situation of many other females, whose marriages have been made for them by their families, and who yet (some of them) have been happier than many who have sacrificed filial duty, and every thing else, to affection.

"And yet—but it is in vain to look back, though in doing so I feel requitted for what my firmness of purpose cost me, by the thought of my dear father's content with me; and very much am I pleased that I had decision enough to remain here, the nun I ought to be in my singular situation. Had I not resisted your temptations to come to you in London, my task might have been more difficult; besides, that I feel I am more than ever necessary to my beloved parent, who, I grieve to say, is visibly worse. The will of Heaven now, as ever, be done; but it is evident to my fears, I cannot enjoy him long. What will then become of me among strangers, in a foreign land? is a fearful question,—as, unless the prince gives up the army, which he can hardly do, he cannot remain here.

"Upon the whole, as you may perceive, I am not happy, though an expectant bride. Love me, however, *chere maman*;—love me as you always have done, and whatever happens, it will be a consolation to your devoted

"BERTHA."

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#### LETTER II.

"We go on just in the same way we did. My prince cousin is still, I may say, most reverential to *me*, as well as to my father: his attentions unremitting, yet still cold; as if to fulfil a duty of etiquette, rather than prompted by the heart. Perhaps this is German, but I am sure it is not English. And yet there is something in his eye, and, though stately and military, a sort of *possibility* of softness in his manner, which wins my good will, and, *perhaps* might win more, but for this strange constraint.

"To-day we walked alone in the wilderness where poor Mr. Clifford met his misfortune. The prince offered me his arm, but with such formality that I was loth to take it. Yet

I did, and with frankness ; for I was resolved, if he persisted in his ceremonious manner, he should not plead mine as an excuse. Did I do wrong, dearest mamma ? or only comply, as I meant to do, with your advice in this regard ? If I am to be united to him—and, though only to gratify duty—if I have kept my heart for him, as I have been told he has for me, he shall not say it is a cold or repulsive heart. He shall at least have the refusal of it.

“ Hence, I refused not his arm, and I thought I felt it press mine ; but to my astonishment, he suddenly gave a deep sigh, and I could not help saying,

“ ‘ Prince, I am afraid you are not well ? ’

“ ‘ Oh, yes ; ’ he answered, in imperfect English ; ‘ impossible not, when you are so good—so full of *amabilite* ! ’

“ ‘ Amiability, you should say,’ observed I.

“ ‘ Ha ; you will teach me the English as I will you the German,’ said he. He then bowed, and tried to smile ; but the smile was too marked with melancholy to be like any smile I had ever seen. Our walk then assumed a solemnity which never relapsed on either side, for he seemed incapable of cheerfulness, and any appearance of it in me became so much an effort, that I at last abandoned the attempt, and when we returned home, I sought my room, and only found relief in tears.

“ But this is not all. The post, which you know comes in before we rise from dinner, brought him a letter [with the foreign post mark, and I observed, he colored extremely on receiving it, and, without opening it, put it hastily into his pocket. My father asked if it was from Berlin, and begged him to open it without ceremony. No, he said, it was not of the least consequence ; but I discovered afterwards, with no small concern, that this could not be, though the discovery was merely accidental. For Margaret, my maid, going into a little cabinet allotted to him adjoining his chamber up stairs, thinking him below, found him poring over a letter, as she says, with tears in his eyes, and that he looked *odd*, by which I found she meant displeased, as he hurried the letter into his portfolio.

“ You, as well as I, know how easily Margaret is excited, and I never count much on her authority ; but here were at

least some particulars that showed the packet could not be of no consequence.

"The whole evening afterwards, though endeavoring to force conversation, what with his own unwillingness, my father's backwardness, and my wonder, the attempt was a failure; nor can I omit to observe that, though in his letter announcing his visit, he alluded, however slightly, to his father's wishes about our engagement, he has not as yet at any time mentioned it. For indeed this from your supposition, that he came to hurry its fulfilment.

"In fact, our whole time has hitherto passed with the same vacuity and dearth of interest that marked its commencement; and if really I had been permitted by our extraordinary circumstances to have known and loved him, I should have felt both mortified and affronted. That there is a mystery about him is clear; how and when it will be unveiled, I wish I could tell you. The wonder is, that my father, always so jealous for me, does not perceive it; but he is, alas! very ill.

"Adieu, dearest friend—I shall be glad of your opinion and advice, in this doubtful situation, in which the only certain thing is that I am far from happy, though

"Your grateful and affectionate

"BERTHA."

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### LETTER III.

"I think this cannot go on much longer. I am sure it shall not, if I can help it. The difficulty is to make my father see that his daughter is not well treated. It is not that the least defect in etiquette can be detected. It is, indeed, too strictly fulfilled. If I come down in the morning, and he and my father are at the breakfast table before me, he starts up in an agitation of ceremony, to make his bow, as if I were the Queen of Prussia herself. If I prepare to walk, he is all over the house for cloaks and bonnets. The same in uncloaking on our return. But *in* the walk, not a word passes but of the weather, or the growing of the flowers. If we ride, which we often do alone, nobody so on the alert to put me on, or take me off my horse; but then no more till dinner.

"I wished him once to talk of Germany and his *chateau*. All the answer I could get was a sigh, or that his *chateau* was not worth talking about. I asked him about the chase of the wild boar, which his countrymen are so fond of, and of the large forests they inhabit. It seemed to rive him (I know not why), to give me an answer. I tried to discover his taste in female beauty and character; he got as far as Charlotte, in Goethe's tale of *Werter*, but there stopt.

"To-day I asked him to teach me German, and he seemed pleased; but he never got beyond opening a book, and then fell into a long reverie, interrupted only by occasional looks of great earnestness at my face, and abortive attempts to address me; so that I began to question, whether his mind was right.

"Uneasy at this, I absolutely asked him whether he had any thing on his mind? He said quickly, 'O! yes; much, much; very much; and you so good, so like the angels—you will hear—but not now.' And then he started up, and striking his forehead with his hand, left the room quickly.

"That there is something which deeply affects him, is very clear; that it relates in some measure to *me* is probable. What an enigma! which none but himself can explain. I told you he had never yet alluded to our situation. Yesterday he did so to my father, but distantly and shortly. Talking of the difference in wealth of the two nations, and the comparative poverty of the German nobles, he said, his father had died poor, as most of the cadets of the nobility are, though high in title, and of sovereign houses. He was ashamed, he added, of being a prince. How would it ever be in his power to support a lady of England, accustomed to such affluence, upon his mere pay? My father bade him put that quite out of his mind; for that his pledge had been given, and ruin would be preferred to a breach of it; but that of ruin there was no fear, though our fortune might be impaired. The prince shrunk from the conversation, and said no more.

"Now, dearest mamma, advise me what I am to do. Is it possible that I can go on *endeavouring* to give my esteem, I was going to say my love, to a man, however apparently amiable, who, if his own master, shews such evident signs that he is not desirous of it? We are not on the footing even of cousins. If I speak with the familiarity of common

friendliness, far more as if sensible of the ties between us, it seems to afflict—nay, fills him with misery.

“A week has now passed in this ambiguous, and I should say (*to me*) degrading situation,—but that evidently he himself is under some secret grief, so oppressive as to do away all thought of intentional ill-usage.

“One thing is evident, that whatever his respect, I have no share of his heart. How lucky, Oh ! how lucky, that he has no part of mine ! Yet I have struggled, in the necessity I saw of enabling my dear father to redeem his pledge for honour's sake, to give him all the affection of an intended wife. How much did this cost me, and yet, you see, had I succeeded better than I did, it might have ruined my happiness, for it is clear he would be the first to release his uncle from his pledge if it were asked.

“All this determines me to lose no time in bringing the affair to a termination. To-morrow I will attempt it. Alas ! if only honour on his part forces on this marriage without affection, what will become of your friend and *protegee*,

“BERTHA.”

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#### LETTER IV.

“The explanation is over. I am astounded—stupified—overcome—yet not lost ; and, upon the whole, not displeased. Poor Adolphus ! he has suffered torture, for I really believe he is full of rectitude and honour, which have had a sad trial. My pride also is saved, had I had any, for he *would* have loved me had it been morally possible, which it was not—no fault of his or mine.

“I am scarcely collected enough to give the details, but will try to do so.

“Resolving then to bring on this explanation, I proposed walking with him in the flower garden ; and passing the summer-house, he paused, as he always does, at the sight of his mother's arms on the side of my father's. The effect was to increase his melancholy, as we entered the summer-house—that summer-house which I myself for a long time never entered, and do not yet enter, without painful recollections ;—

for never can I forget a parting which grieved my very heart, from the desolation which it caused before my eyes to another, who deserved better than to love a person who could not return his love. But of this no more.

"I knew not why, but Adolphus trembled violently as we took seats on two garden-chairs, and I soon found that he was as anxious as myself to bring our most uncomfortable state to a conclusion.

"Far from avoiding the questions I had resolved to ask, he seemed himself desirous to seek the subject, though evidently under extreme difficulty how to introduce it. He began in English, but went on in French.

"*'Hab !'* said he, *'the occasion I wished is come. Will my dear cousin amiably let me talk to her with my open heart ?'*

"I assured him there was nothing I wished more, especially as he had told me he had much to say.

"*'I know you have the heaven's goodness,'* said he, *'and will feel for my misery ; but I must, on that very account, be more true to you.'* He then went on in French : *'You must, I fear, have thought me cold and ungrateful, if only not to be happy under such a welcome as I have received from my uncle and you, and the prospect of such a treasure as my lovely cousin. God knows I am neither one nor the other ; not cold, and not ungrateful ; and, Oh ! if I had but seen you before—if I had but known your worth, your beauty, and your goodness—my God, what might I not have been spared ! and she, too, poor, unhappy, and yet virtuous and innocent as she is.'*

"*'What is your meaning, prince ?'* asked I, quickly, for I was startled. *'Of whom do you speak ? How can I understand you ?'* Indeed I was astonished and excited by this speech.

"*'Ah ! true,'* said he ; *'I have been surprised by my admiration of you, my cousin, into a too hasty disclosure of my sad history. But listen to me, my amiable cousin, and promise not to be offended at my sincerity, and I will endeavor to set my embarrassment before you.'*

"*'Sincerity,'* I answered, *'can never offend me ;'* and I felt my curiosity more and more raised.

"*'Well, then,'* said he, *'the engagement made for us by*



our parents, without our knowledge or consent—made, indeed when we were children—will you forgive me, dear Miss Hastings,—if——?”

“‘If what?’ asked I, for he hesitated. ‘Speak boldly all you feel; for I am prepared to hear.’”

“‘If, then,’ continued he, ‘when it was communicated to me (which it was not, till I was sixteen, and got my first commission in the army), I thought it cruel and unjust to us both, and as such, was sorry for it. But recollect, dearest cousin, I had then never seen you.’”

“Seeing he was embarrassed by a kindly fear of offending me, I told him all excuse was unnecessary, for I myself could not approve of such engagements.

“‘Hah!’ said he (and a gleam of satisfaction shot from his really fine eyes), ‘do you think of them as I do? Do you wish our’s undone?’”

“‘I am devoted to my father’s will,’ I replied.

“His countenance instantly fell, as he exclaimed, ‘I feared so.’”

“‘Feared so!’

“‘Ah! I see,’ cried he, ‘I have again offended you; believe me, to do so will make me the most miserable of men.’”

“‘Be assured, prince,’ said I, ‘no apology is necessary to me, nor to my father either, who entered into this engagement with Prince Frederick, your father, as you say, unjustly towards us, and only at the dying request of my mother, to whom he could refuse nothing, and whose last moments he soothed by it. Nor am I surprised that you wish it broken.’”

“‘O! do not say so,’ answered he; ‘do not think, after having known you, I could ever have such a wish, or ever not rejoice at my aunt’s dying request, and the consent of both our fathers—if——’”

“Here his feelings overcame him, till he relieved my anxiety by concluding, in faltering accents, ‘if I had not found that my heart was not my own to give you.’”

“I was breathless while this was going on; but the sentence finished, I felt a relief I cannot describe. The secret is now out, thought I; we are both free—no fault either of mine or my father’s—honor not broken, yet happiness not disturbed.

"All this flashed across me at the instant, and I believe my countenance showed it, for he remarked the change, and exclaimed, 'O, heavens! am I so happy as to have confessed my breach of duty and honor, and yet not be punished by your indignation? O! beautiful and dear cousin, say in words as well as in looks that you do not despise and hate me, and will not drive me from your presence—say this, and I may still be happy.'

"'Believe me, prince,' said I, 'in this respect I am all you can wish. As we neither of us knew the other, you cannot wonder that when you came to us, I felt prepared to fulfil this engagement more out of duty to a parent who loves me better than himself, than from affection for a person, however esteemed, whom I had never seen. And as you cannot be offended at this, so neither can I, that you are in the same situation; and this I should say, if even your heart was not as you tell me, occupied elsewhere. But you must now go on,' continued I (for I felt gaily), 'and inform me who it is that has made you her conquest—who that is to be my new cousin—whom I dare say I shall love. Some distinguished person of the Prussian nobility, no doubt; some happy lady of the court.'

"At this his countenance again fell, and his old gloom came over him, and, with a melancholy shake of the head, a deep sigh escaped him when he said, 'No. And yet,' added he, 'why should I be ashamed of virtue, delicacy, and lovely beauty, all united with natural elegance, which equals, or rather exceeds, in interest, all that I ever saw in any court?'

"'Why, indeed?' said I. 'But after thus raising my own interest about this unknown lady, will you not gratify it? will you not tell me who she is, and the history of your attachment? Indeed I think I have some right to know.'

"'Indeed, my amiable cousin, I think you have, and shall,' returned he; 'but at this moment I am too agitated, too suddenly raised from misery to happiness, to possess my faculties clear enough to give you proper possession of the facts. But I have already begun, and with midnight labour, have almost finished a candid relation of them all—all which drew me into this position; thinking that the time might come, as it has, when it might be necessary, if not for my vindication, at least

to explain a conduct which must have appeared so mysterious. One hour more applied to it, and it shall be laid before you, and God send that you may think me excusable'

"As you may suppose, I readily assented to this ; he sought and kissed my hand, which I could not well refuse, and we both left the summer-house with lighter hearts than we entered it.

"At dinner we were both better company, which made my father feel so too, for he acknowledged that Adolphus's determined melancholy had both puzzled and hurt him.

"In the evening we walked again, and he then put a packet into my hands, which he called his narrative. He wished, he said, that he could have written it in English, or that I could have read it in German ; as it was, he had put it down in French, such as it was.

"On receiving it, I became so impatient for its contents, that I shortened my walk, and begged to return with it to the house, which he did not oppose. And as I returned, I could not help thinking, as God generally tempers evil with good, that if my poor Foljambe's life was to be shortened, there was at least this attendant good upon that evil, that a quarrel, perhaps fatal to both him and Adolphus, had been avoided. For, with my brother's vehemence and proud spirit, he would never have allowed what he would have called this affront, on the part of the prince, to pass unrevenged. This concealment of the engagement too from him, in consequence of this unfortunate violence of his passions, was a proof of my dear father's quiet sagacity, I hasten, however, to the contents of the packet."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE PRINCE'S NARRATIVE.

*Florizel.* I bless the time  
When my good falcon made her flight across  
Thy father's ground.

Or I'll be thine, my fair,  
Or not my father's; for I cannot be  
Mine own; nor any thing to any, if  
I be not thine. To this I am most constant,  
Though destiny say no.

*Polixenes.* This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever  
Ran on the greensward; nothing she does, or seems,  
But smacks of something greater than herself;  
Too noble for this place.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Winter's Tale.*

No trifling events are announced in the mottoes I have chosen for this chapter, and well do they develop what I have to relate. I therefore proceed, without comment, to record, though I abridge, the narrative which the prince, according to his intimation, laid before the astonished Bertha.

"When my father, Prince Frederick," said Adolphus in his narrative, "announced to me this engagement, made when we were children, and unknown to each other, I had but just got my commission in my father's regiment, and it was a question whether he should not send me to England to make acquaintance with, and cultivate the charming person to whom I was thus betrothed. Had he done so, much affliction would have been spared; for who that had seen her could fail to love her? But, upon deliberation, the relations between Prussia and Austria being disturbed, I was not allowed to depart from my post, and afterwards, I conceived such a dread of having my affections thus fettered, that I sought, by every means in my power, to postpone a visit to which I had taken an inconceivable dislike. Even my curiosity could not excite me to it; and, as it was settled that the contract should not be fulfilled till I was three-and-twenty, I the more easily found reasons to persuade my father not to hurry the visit. Sometimes it was the military, sometimes the court service;

for I was a cambellan to the king. But the most persuasive inducement was my wish to study at the university of Weimar, where I accordingly passed three years—with the intervals which it was necessary to pass with my regiment at the reviews, and now and then an attendance at court.

“For the first of these years study was very sweet to me, for I enjoyed the instruction and friendship of Goethe; and though I perhaps was not quite pleased with having been betrothed from infancy from family views, where my heart had never been consulted, yet the universal and uniform account I had received of the accomplishments, virtues, and beauty of my noble cousin, while it flattered my hopes, left my mind and heart perfectly free to engage in literature, or other pursuits and exercises, suitable to my age and profession.

“Among others, I felt a passion common to all Germans, especially princes, for hunting the wild boar; and to enjoy this, I not only profited by every thing like vacation from study, but frequently played truant from my tutor, who excused it, partly from good-nature, partly from thinking the diversion so noble.

“Most of these excursions were unknown to my father. In one of them an adventure befel me, the consequences of which materially affected all my pursuits and views in life. I will relate it in all simplicity and truth, without attempting to varnish any part of it by a partial representation, or to conceal my own weakness, in what I felt and what have done.

“At the end of a long day’s chase of the boar, I was returning to the town of Eisenach, where for a few days I had established my quarters; the *garde-de-foret* had left me with the dogs, and I was alone, when a fresh boar suddenly broke from a covert, and made at first as if it would attack me; but, my horse plunging much, it turned and took to flight.

“My ardour was such, that, totally mindless that my companions had left me, I pursued it, though with difficulty, for the forest was almost trackless. Its gloom, too, adding to the darkness of an autumnal evening, left me not merely incapable of farther sport, but perplexed me how to find my way out of it. In fact, I believe I wandered in circles, so that I was completely overtaken by night, without seeming to have advanced a yard towards any beaten road that might lead to

the habitation of man. I found afterwards that every step I had taken had carried me round and round the town of Eisenach.

"In this difficulty, and with the pleasant prospect of passing the night with no bed but the cold ground, I was relieved by hearing the bark of a dog, and soon after seeing a light, which shot apparently from the window of a cottage, I of course approached it, and after some parley with a man, who seemed the owner, and questioned me much as to my business, and how I came there, I was admitted.

"I did not say who I was; but my regimentals shewing I was an officer of Prussia, I was received as such, and made welcome as long as I chose to stay. This, however, was difficult to settle; for I was not only several miles from my place of rest, but it was totally impossible to find the way without a guide; and as the host was the only man on the spot, he could not, he said, well leave his family, consisting of three females—Eisenach, too, being a fortified town, the gates would be shut. It was therefore settled that I should remain all night, with such accommodation as they could give me.

"My host, who was a *der forster*, or *sous garpede-foret*, undertook also to take care of my horse, for which he was, in truth, much better provided than for myself, the stables, to which his cottage was merely an appendage, having been erected for the use of the Duke of Weimar, when he came to hunt in the forest.

"As to my bed, by a piece of good luck, as my host said, there was not much difficulty for that night; for a lady and her daughter, who had lodged with them for some time, and had the only good rooms in the house, were absent that day at Eisenach, and would not return till the morrow, so that I might have their bed, which, being the *frau's* own, said the *der forster*, was an exceeding good one.

"The arrangement was soon made, and after a supper, homely enough, I was conducted up stairs into a room, large for the house, and so furnished that I might have thought myself at Weimar or Berlin. At first I hesitated to make use of it; but both host and hostess assured me that the lady, who was the most kindly person alive, except her daughter, who was equal to her in obligingness, would be quite pleased to

think they had accommodated a benighted Ritter. I therefore consented and prepared for repose.

"But, first, I could not help surveying the chamber, which would have been elegant any where, but, in this place, was surprisingly so. Two beds, furnished with the finest linen, and curtains of chintz; a small Persian carpet, japan chairs, and a bookcase of the same, filled with choice works of Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Gesner, and Klopstock. I was quite amazed; could not at first sleep for thinking who these lodgers could be; and when I did, had a romantic dream; such as a gentleman of twenty, benighted in a forest, might be supposed to indulge.

"In the morning I made haste up, in order that the room I had made so free with might be restored to the neatness in which I found it, and that the owners might not be shocked at finding it had been so disturbed. I would have decamped, too, early, but was seized with curiosity to know who these superior people were—superior, as inmates of such a house. I could, however, get little about them from the *der forster*, except that they had lodged with him six months; had fitted up their bed-room, and another for music, and to sit in, at their own expense; passed most of their time, when out of doors, in the forest; and, when in, with their books and music. I asked if he knew not who they were? He said, no, except that their name was Beckman, and they came from Leipsic; that he had first called them Von Beckman, but they forbade him, saying they had no right to it. I asked if they had no acquaintance? None, but the pastor, he said, and the poor whom he recommended; for they were very charitable, and religious too.

"I asked if they were good looking, particularly the young lady, but immediately checked myself, for I thought of England. He, however, would not let this pass, but laughed, and said I had better wait and judge for myself; but that, to his mind, and angel could not be more beautiful than the *fraulein*.

"At that instant I was enabled to make the judgment he suggested, for the noise of wheels announced their return in a caleche, from which they alighted, the younger lady with such grace and airiness, as bespoke the nymph-like being she was. I, however, could not see her face, for she was busied

with assisting her mother, to whom she seemed to shew the most affectionate attention. When she turned, however, and came in, I thought my host's account was true, for never had my young experience seen her equal, whether in the salons of Dresden or Berlin. I had, within a few days, been enchanting myself with the perusal of Charlotte and Werter; the image of Charlotte, spite of England, was deep in my heart, and that image seemed here realized. Heaven defend me, thought I, from the fate of Werter.

"It may be supposed that the ladies were surprised at seeing a young hussar in such a place, though, as the garrison of Eisenach was not very far off, they accounted for it; but when, as I thought it right by myself, I revealed who I was, and the history of my coming all the way from Weimar, and being benighted in the Schwienforst, in pursuit of a boar, was told them, partly by the landlord, partly by myself, their wonder revived, and the elder lady asked, rather anxiously as I thought, though with perfect good breeding, where and how I could have been accommodated; then, seeing that honest Hermann, the landlord, began to be a little confused, while preparing to explain, she anticipated him, and with a politeness, amounting to benevolence, which I never forgot, 'I see,' she said, 'that what I hoped is true, and that you have at least had a little better accommodation than the other chambers of this poor place could afford. My absence I shall look upon as fortunate, if it has saved your lordship from such an inconvenience.'

"While I lost not a word of this well-bred address of the elder lady, I could not move my eyes from the countenance of the younger. Ingenuousness and freshness were its chief characteristics; for never did I see one so dazzling with youth and health, yet so corrected by a downcast modesty. To describe it, is impossible—to escape it, was hopeless. Her eye spoke ten thousand languages, yet I never could find out its colour, so varied was its expression, yet so soft the feelings it seemed to convey. It lightened—it languished—it commanded—it entreated—and when it did the last, what heart could withstand it? Mine could not; did not; for in less than ten minutes I was her captive, never again to be free.

"We adjourned to the sitting-room above stairs, of which



Madame Beckman did the honours with the same ease and self-possession as I had remarked below ; while the young Mathilde, from the mere display of her sweet manners and unaffected nature, completed the conquest which her outward charms had begun. Pardon me, dear cousin, if never having seen you—wholly ignorant of the attractions I now witness, which, if known, would have rendered me insensible to all I have been relating ; and, moreover, not in good humour with an engagement, made for me without my consent—pardon me, I say, if I forgot England—forgot you—forgot my father, and thought of nothing but the beaming houri that stood before me. As you have told me to relate to you honestly, and without reserve, all my feelings, you see how I obey you.

“ But if this was my situation at first sight of the little fairy Mathilde, then only sixteen (myself but twenty), what was it afterwards, when not only her personal charms, but her very sweet character, of which yours so much and so continually reminds me, were unfolded in a manner to enhance them a hundred-fold ? Can you be surprised if I felt, what I thought this terrible engagement, more and more irksome, and that I resolved to adopt all possible means to avoid one who was unknown, for the sake of her who was known. There was in this, dear cousin, no treason to you, and from what I shall relate, nothing but loyalty to Mathilde.

“ Not to detain you too long, the impression made both by Mathilde and her mother was deep and lasting. Obligated to return to Eisenach, if only for clothes, I was uneasy till I again found myself at Hermann’s cottage, which I did the next day, and met a reception that won me still more. An uncommon politeness in the mother, and a visible joy in the daughter, played havoc with my imagination. A third visit, of the same character, only made the impression more absorbing, and all notion of hunting wild boars, or studying at Weimar, or joining my regiment, or waiting at court, was forgotten.

“ The intimacy, thus commenced, proceeded, and I so far learned the history of Madame Beckman’s retirement, as to find that it was to avoid some very improper advances of a very great person, a prince of a royal house, who persecuted the young and beautiful Mathilde with addresses, which neither were, nor, from his rank, could be, honourable. The

widow of one of the professors of Leipsic—still residing there—Madame Beckman could not, while in the place, escape the persecution, and she retreated to this forest, to remain *incognita*, till the prince should have finished his studies, and removed from the university.

“Madame Beckman was every way an excellent person, and after she became familiarized with my rank, treated me almost like a son, as Mathilde did like a brother, though she never would call me so, but odiously persisted in the ceremonial of *Monseigneur* and *Altesse*.

“In consequence of this, Madame Beckman gave me serious counsel upon my truant conduct. She told me truly that it would ruin me with my father and my sovereign, not to mention that my obvious partiality to Mathilde would ruin herself; and entreated, even with tears, that I would return to Berlin.

“At these moments Mathilde would shed tears too, and if she spoke, it was to second her mother; but something secretly whispered me that her heart was, on these occasions, at variance with her tongue. I was, however, obliged to obey my father and my king, and, for a time at least, tear myself away, with a resolution, not concealed, that I would take the earliest possible opportunity to return.

“Frequently I examined myself on the subject of my engagement but my heart being now positively given to another, my original aversion to it was heightened in a tenfold degree, and I was more than ever ingenious in fabricating excuses against the visit to England.

“This did not escape my father, who before had had his suspicions of the fact, but was now put out of all doubt by an occurrence, honourable to Mrs. Beckman, but sinister, I thought, to me. One morning, having sent for me to his chamber, where he was ill, I found him with an open letter in his hand, which he immediately put into mine, and told me to read it. It was from Madame Beckman, and, as I never forgot a word of it, I will record it here.

“ ‘The Sub-keeper Hermann’s cottage  
in the Schweinforst, Eisenach.

“ ‘MY LORD,—It is with regret and unwillingness that I intrude myself upon your highness; but duty to myself, as

well as to your illustrious family, and, above all, to the prince, your noble son, compels me to apprise you of the delicate and dangerous position in which his warm heart, and most generous temper, have involved him. By a mere accident in hunting, he discovered the retired place where myself and my daughter were lodging; he repeated his visits till I was fearful of the consequences; for I cannot conceal from your highness, that his partiality to my daughter was not disguised, and would I could say that his attentions had been without effect upon her young heart. Knowing the insurmountable distance between our humble family and your highness's illustrious house, I trembled for the consequences; for the prince's honourable nature left me no doubt of his intentions, and I often, with tears, entreated him to leave us in our obscurity. But he would not listen, and when recalled by your parental mandate from Weimar, where he was supposed to be, he intimated his determined resolution to visit us again.

"I have but one line of duty to pursue, which is to inform your highness of this situation of your son, in order that your highness may take such precautions as your rank may demand, for its preservation from the danger to which a misplaced affection may expose it.

"I am with due respect,

"Your highness's servant,

"GUNDRED BECKMAN.

"Widow of Professor Willelm Beckman, of the University of Leipsic."

"My agitation, while reading this letter, may be conceived, especially as my father fixed his eyes upon me during the whole time. His temper was remarkably cool, but honourable and determined, and it appeared in the tone and manner in which he said, 'Well, Sir, what do you think of it?' To which I replied, 'As the letter of a noble-minded woman, who has written truth in every word of it.'

"So far you are yourself true to her," said my father. "How far you are so to your relations in England, who have preserved their honour towards us, or how far to your ancestors, from whom our descent is among the few now in existence, which are spotless on all sides, I leave you to judge."

I suppose from this letter you have already contemplated a *mesalliance*.'

"'Father,' I replied, 'I never have deceived you, and never will.'

"'Wait then, at least,' answered he, 'till this tottering frame of mine has sunk. Let me not witness the disgrace. Promise me never to visit these ladies again while I live. Ladies they evidently are, although the customs of the world deny them that title.'

"'I promise you, my dear father,' replied I, in agitation. 'On the other hand, though I presume not to make a condition, and therefore do not demand a promise, let me hope that you will not insist upon this English visit, at least till my time has expired, and I am three-and-twenty.'

"'Depending upon your own good faith, I will not,' said my father. 'Leave me, for I am not well.'

"Nor was he, for though not apparently in danger, he had the seeds of a mortal disease beginning to shew themselves in him; and from the chamber which he had sought, as he thought, for a few days' relief, he never afterwards stirred. Yet he did not immediately die, and before his death I had the satisfaction of reading his answer to the letter of Mathilde's mother, in which he bore the highest testimony of respect and gratitude to that honourable woman.

"There was now a prodigious alteration in my views. I was no longer under any control but my own, and I thought I had a right to dispose of my heart as I pleased. It was a right given by nature to man, which nobody could take from him. But I behaved like a coward. Instead of coming to fair and open explanations with you and my uncle on the subject, I was sullen and silent, and, in fact, shrank from you with fear. Yet I resolved ultimately to go over to England, to throw myself at your feet, and confessing my predilection for another, to leave it to you to exact the performance of our engagement or not. Had I done this immediately, or done no more, perhaps I might not have been so much to blame; but meantime, and before this was done, I pursued Mathilde.

"As soon as my affairs, and the sincere grief I felt for my excellent parent, permitted, I flew to Hermann's cottage; but the birds were flown.

"The removal from the University of the royal personage whose designs had forced them into exile, had left them free, and they had returned to Leipsic. Hither I followed them, and had the delight of finding myself rapidly advancing in Mathilde's affection; when I awakened as from a dream, in which I had too sadly lost myself, by the reflection of my total want of power, consistently with honour, to continue the career I was pursuing.

"The thought, as if it had never occurred before, came like a thunder-clap upon me; I felt agonized, maddened, and despairing of pardon, either from you or the Beckmans. But I at last resolved to execute the design I had conceived, of going to England and throwing myself on your mercy. It was impossible, I felt, that your heart could be in the least interested. It was a mere family arrangement, out of which, if you thought as I did, I trusted my retreat would not be difficult. In truth, I feared my uncle more than you. With this resolution I fled from Leipsic, and came to Foljambe Park. You know the rest."

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So closed the narrative, which produced a complete settlement of the question as to the engagement in the mind of Bertha, relieving her, as she said to Lady Hungerford, from all anxiety, and restoring her to herself.

Uncertainty, however, and uneasiness too, remained in regard to Mr. Hastings, who was too ill to be agitated by such an important alteration in his views, and whose feelings might have been sensibly hurt by it, even if well.

It was to aid her friend in her embarrassment that Lady Hungerford flew to her, on the receipt of her last letter; but the increasing illness of Mr. Hastings prevented for some time all communication of the affair. The great and unexpected improvement in his health had, however, at length permitted it, nor did it produce any shock. The assurance which Bertha gave him, and which her whole demeanour confirmed, that the change was rather satisfactory to her than otherwise; and the evidence which the letters and narrative I have just transcribed gave, that had the engagement proceeded, it would have ended in misery of both; all this had its due weight with his right-judging mind. He was indeed himself relieved from no small anxiety for his darling child,

occasioned by a delay for which he could not account ; and as his honour was totally uncompromised, and he appeared even in the character of a generous friend to his nephew, in releasing him from his fetters, the effect upon his peace, and therefore his health, was really beneficial.

It remains to add, by way of completing the history of what may be called this romance, that my conjecture was right as to the ignorance of the engagement on the part of Foljambe. This, according to Granville, who told it me, arose from the fear of the overbearing pride and violence of his temper, aiming, even at that young age, at nothing less than the control of his whole family ; but particularly from the fear of the affected contempt which he always expressed for the German alliance, and the virulent opposition he would certainly have made to drawing it closer. His father, therefore, imposed silence on Bertha, and kept it himself, during Foljambe's life ; and Granville and Lady Hungerford were the only confidants of the secret, after the death of Foljambe ; hence their late extraordinary mystery with me, and hence Foljambe's zealous recommendation, when alive, of the proposals of the two other suitors.

Having thus, I trust, enlightened my readers on what they might think the perplexing story of the prince, I now proceed with my own.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

ANOTHER RIVAL APPEARS ON THE SCENE, WHICH MIGHT OCCASION ALARM, BUT SINKS BEFORE MY CONFIDENCE IN BERTHA'S CHARACTER.

The four winds blow in from every coast  
Renowned suitors.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Merchant of Venice*.

HAD I myself been allowed to peruse the letters and narrative which I have just set before my reader, almost as much

in pity to him as for my own convenience in relating my story, it may be supposed that I should have proceeded in my interesting undertaking with far different hopes, and in far different spirits, than those which actually possessed me. It is certain, that although, as I have stated, I was so devoted to the feeling that absorbed me, and of so sanguine a temperament, that I was contented to pursue my design, yet I wished for something far more real, and better set off as to particulars, than the mere naked assurance, though upon such good authority as the friends who gave it, that Bertha's heart as well as hand was free.

At any rate, did I gain any thing by this in regard to myself? Was there the smallest encouragement held out to me that, because the prince (from whatever cause) had failed, I should succeed? How much might also depend upon the cause of that failure, which the reader will recollect I did not at this time know, and was therefore left to pursue my way, in almost as uncomfortable a state of ignorance of the details, as I had so long been struggling with as to the fact itself.

Upon the whole, therefore, my conferences with Granville, though they so far encouraged hope as to relieve me from fear of the prince, it was a hope by no means amounting to confidence; and in the midst of the satisfaction of being delivered from the terror of one rival, my peace was somewhat disturbed by the threatening announcement of another.

Granville was as usual the channel of the intelligence, and from the time he took for it, which was just half-an-hour before dinner, I accused him of the ill nature of an intention to spoil that necessary meal. Having finished his own toilet, he came to me while at mine, and my valet having retired, he asked me at once, and, as I thought, rather abruptly, whether the intelligence he had given me as to Bertha's freedom, had produced any, and what determination as to my own conduct?

"You seem in a hurry," said I; "yet, upon my faith, the scanty materials you have given me, by which to shape my resolution, do not appear to require any particular haste."

"More, perhaps," returned he, "than you are aware of, for young Mansell comes here to-night."

"And what then?"

"Why, then, he means to enter the list with you as a suitor to his cousin; and who knows but he may succeed?"

"I do," replied I, with great firmness. "You might as well suppose that if he had offered to Lady Hungerford, before your worship appeared, her ladyship would have married him."

"And yet Venus married Vulcan;—and a fresh-coloured Yorkshire squire, with good blood in his veins——"

"Well?"

"Though a bit of a blockhead, and not able to dance as you do——"

"Well?"

"Yet with eight thousand a-year——"

"Well?"

"May be thought as good for a husband, as the blacksmith was by the Goddess of Beauty. Such qualifications have won many a sentimental lady, fond of dancing too (though he is such a clown at it), before now. I assure you I am horribly afraid."

"So am not I."

"Well, but Honora is. Will not that shake you?"

"No."

"What has made you so confident?"

"Heaven knows, for my own success, I am not so—but if success were to depend upon comparison, I dare enter the lists with him. I cannot give Bertha eight thousand a-year, but I can give what he never can, a heart and a mind fully able to understand and appreciate her perfections; and much I mistake if she would not value this more than a dozen coaches and six. Whom she may love I know not, but of this I am sure that—

‘Her love, more noble than the world,  
Prizes not quantity of dirty lands.’”

"*Molto bravo!*" cried Granville; "but at least prepare for the trial, for, as I told you, Mansell comes here to-night."

Granville then told me a most amusing trait of this distinguished young gentleman, which, however, deserved not so much laughter as he bestowed upon it, for it shewed a modesty for which we had not given him credit. It seems he



had always, and for years, felt—to use his own expression—a *sneaking kindness* for his cousin. The prince's visit had frightened him; but that over, he resolved to lose no more time, lest, to use the same language, somebody else should snap her up.

This he said in a letter to Granville, containing also the most precious document of all—no less than the letter of the squire himself, making his proposal to his cousin, accompanied by the characteristic request, that he (Granville) would look it over and correct it for him, before he arrived to present it. “For,” said he, “as you are an author, and have written several things about love, which, I have heard say, are very pretty, you must be a judge of the proper style, and therefore I beg you to help me, being not much used to that sort of thing myself.”

Granville here continued to laugh so heartily, that I accused him of injustice to what seemed a most praiseworthy modesty.

“But pray, said I, “may I ask your opinion of the composition? I do not, of course, ask to see it.”

“No; honor forbids that; but thus much I may be permitted to tell, that it is written in a good school-hand, almost all well spelt, and though the sentimental part cannot be complimented, yet as to style, it is so original, that it is impossible to correct it without destroying its genuineness.

“There is also another despatch,” continued Granville, “which I am charged to deliver to his uncle, in which he at least shows generosity, if not delicacy; for he tells him, by way of bribe, that, in consideration of his late losses, he will take Bertha without a fortune.”

“At any rate,” said I, growing serious, “this is a matter not to be lightly treated.”

“Certainly not,” replied he; for though I thought it but due to our friendship to tell you this the moment I received it, which was not a half an hour ago, I thought myself bound to lay it before my uncle directly, whatever may become of the letter to Bertha.”

“I cannot say you are wrong,” answered I, losing all disposition to be amused; “and who knows how it may be taken by Mr. Hastings?”

“I think I can tell you,” said he. “It will ruin him with

his uncle directly ; for the offer, particularly for the reason assigned, will be considered as a deadly affront, both by father and daughter."

I felt reassured, but was struck by my friend's assuming a graver air than he had hitherto showed, when he said,

"Although we have but one opinion as to the result to Mansell—"

"Who are the *we*?" interrupted I, unless that dear Lady Hungerford is apprised of the matter, and has condescended to be interested as to my share in it."

"I need not tell you that she is," said Granville, "and she thinks it may and must lead to a serious decision on your part, which may considerably affect, nay, alter your present position: hence my question to you when I came in."

"For God's sake, let me know it," returned I, now in downright alarm. "But Lady Hungerford cannot think this rich churl worthy of Bertha."

"That she does not," answered he; "but as no other person is in view, and the field perfectly open, free from even expectation of any other——"

"And can that be?" again interrupted I. "Have I disguised myself so well? Has a seven years' constancy, continued even after rejection; a disclosure torn from me by madness; a life risked, and renewed devotion; have all these spoken so indistinctly as to convey no meaning? Surely, they are and must be convinced that——"

"Patience, patience, impetuous youth," cried Granville, "nor suppose that because you feel every beat of your own heart, others are bound to do so too. In truth, I believe Mrs. Margaret, who discovered you before, is the only one of the family besides ourselves who has had the sagacity to penetrate you now. For, emboldened by the familiarity which she has been indulged in by all whom she knows, she said to me only this morning, she was as sure as sixpence that Mister Clifford was *still* in love with her lady."

"And you?"

"I could only laugh, and did not desire her to inform Bertha of it, who without that, I am persuaded, has no suspicion."

"Well, Sir," said I, not a little impatiently, "and what has this to do with Lady Hungerford's surmise?"

"A great deal," replied he; "for don't you perceive that while there is not a suspicion, on the part of either Bertha or her father, that there is a competition for her hand, a single offer has, at least, a better chance of being listened to? and though he is coarse and rough, yet, as he has no vice, is of their own blood, and rich withal, his sister rather a favourite, and in the same county too——"

"O! hold," cried I, more and more uneasy; "you need not go on to enumerate his advantages, but say at once what Lady Hungerford thinks about him."

"Not so much about him," proceeded Granville, "as about yourself, in regard to whom she thinks it unfair that Mr. Hastings certainly, if not Bertha, should be called upon to decide upon a case, when all is not before them; in short, when there are two strings to their bow, to act as if there were but one."

"And what does that imply?" said I, a good deal embarrassed, for I saw there was but one answer.

"Why, what you plainly forestal," replied he; "though I am aware of all the danger to your delicacy and independence, and as jealous for them as yourself. No; Bertha must know nothing of your wishes or intentions. But with regard to her father it is different; and it will only be calling upon you to put the principle I have sometimes heard you lay down into practice, that a suitor should always disclose his wishes to the parent, before he opens them to the child, from the fear lest, if he secure the affection of the child, and difficulty occur with the parent, a great evil might arise which might have been avoided."

"I have held that opinion," said I, "which I do not retract when I own my hesitation to speak to Mr. Hastings first. For this might only produce rejection, which never, without mockery, could be set at defiance by perseverance; while favour on his part would by no means amount to acceptance on hers. Then, as to addressing herself at present, you know, and allow, my objections. The consequence is, I dare not open myself to either. On the other hand, I should wrong the ideas I have of Bertha's sweet character, if I did not leave it to itself in judging intrinsically upon the merits or demerits of any one who addressed her, without influence or bias from any thing extraneous. Shall I own to you, that

with all my sense of inferiority to her in every light that can be imagined, I should feel little flattered at being merely preferred to this dolt, who certainly sat for Pope's description of a country lover:—

'Who visits with a gun, presents you birds,  
Then gives a smacking kiss, and cries, no words;  
Or with his hound comes hallooing from the stable,  
Makes love with nods, and knees beneath the table;  
Whose laughs are hearty, though his jests are coarse,  
And loves you best of all things—but his horse.'

"To that," replied Granville, "every one that knows you both must assent; but what is the result?"

"That I will cling to my persuasion, my invincible assurance, that, even though Mr. Hastings were to recommend it, and it were a thousand times more advantageous, the gentle but firm spirit of his daughter would refuse the alliance."

"I believe you are right," returned Granville; "nor will I tax you with much vanity, in not being afraid of such a rival, were you both to appear as candidates together; though of the prudence of leaving the field open to all the chances there are for him, if left alone, but of which he might be so instantly deprived by your mere appearance, I am not so sure."

"If Bertha's unaided choice," returned I, "weighing her pure silver against this dross, does not reject it, in the language of my Shaksperian ancestor,

'Upon my honour, for a silken point,  
I'll give my barony.'

"My lord baron," replied Granville, with some irony, "I only wish you had your barony to give; and as the dinner bell is ringing, I humbly take my leave."

By this I found that he was not too well pleased with my rejection of his advice; but buoyed up by my conviction that Bertha, even were she portionless would never stoop to be the wife of a man by nature made for a groom, I could not repent my decision.

## CHAPTER XXV.

FARTHER UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT BERTHA.—I FEEL LOST AMID  
A CROWD OF SUPERIOR INTERESTS.—PICTURE OF MY NEW  
RIVAL, AND OF THE SUCCESS THAT ATTENDED HIM.

Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse, and he makes it a great appropriation of his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afraid that my lady his mother played false with a smith.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Merchant of Venice.*

AT dinner we were all, I thought, strangely quiet, or rather absent. Whether Mr. Hastings had already communicated Mansell's advance to his daughter or not, both of them seemed occupied with anything but what was before them. Whether, too, Granville was really angry with me, and had made Lady Hungerford share his anger, I could not tell, but both were grave and *distract*.

For myself, though I can hardly account for it, I never was so little so. I believe I felt a sort of triumph in having, as I thought, done such justice to Bertha. The only observation that could even tacitly allude to the subject was by Mr. Hastings himself who, by way of informing those who did not know it, said,

"Mr. Mansell comes to-night. He does us a great deal of honour."

At which, the dinner being ended, he rose, as had been his custom since his illness, and, attended by Bertha, retired to his *siesta* in his room.

She soon returned, and the conversation became a little more lively. I had watched her upon her father's announcing Mansell's visit, and thought I could perceive her colour heightened. She knows the object, thought I.

On her return, Lady Hungerford, looking at Granville, said, "I think we might have excused our Nimrod of a cousin upon this occasion."

"He, however, brings Lucinda with him," observed Bertha,

"which will be something;"—at which, I know not why, she reddened still more.

"You always were fond of Lucinda," said Lady Hungerford, trying to talk.

"I like her spirits when my own are down," replied Bertha. "It would not be amiss, I think, if she were here now, for we 'seem any thing but preparing for a wedding."

"Do you think that is always so sprightly?" asked Granville. "If your own were approaching, would you be grave or gay?"

At the words "your own approaching," I thought she looked a little conscious, nay gave a slight start, and I own this puzzled me.

"You have no right to ask such questions of young ladies," said Lady Hungerford.

"Besides," added Bertha, "he knows that I will never leave papa, and am therefore married already."

"Aye, but you have not vowed it upon the altar," said Granville, "and without that, the marriage is void."

"But I have vowed it in my own heart," answered Bertha, "and that is the same thing."

This alarmed me.

"By no means," pursued Granville; "at least I hope not; for I once, because I was a younger brother, made a vow of celibacy myself, yet was most ambitious to break it from the moment I saw this lady: I do hope I am not foresworn. Speak to it Clifford; you are a scholar, and an Oxford casuist. Relieve my anxiety; for the alternative is too horrible."

"I have no doubt," said I, "you could never persuade yourself to break your vow. What would you give me, therefore, if I could bring you off?"

"All I am worth in the world, and ten times more—when I can get it."

"I hope Mr. Clifford will succeed," said Lady Hungerford; "for I am a little alarmed at perjury, and knew nothing of this vow."

"Well, then," observed I, "let me remind you of the gallant Lord Longueville, of the studious but too amorous Count of Navarre. He foreswore the company of women, for the sake of study, for three years; but forsook his books for a

mistress in three days. When reproached for his broken vow—you remember his reply?"

"No."

"Then when you have got it by heart, do not forget to repeat it with all Lord Longueville's fervour to the 'empress of his love'—

'Did not the heavenly rhetorick of thine eye,  
(*'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument*),  
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?'

You see it was her ladyship's fault, not yours."

"That is making me an accomplice," said Lady Hungerford, "and I do not accept the excuse."

"Aye; but mind how he goes on," added I:—

"'Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment;  
A woman I foreswore; but I will prove,  
Thou being a goddess, I foreswore not thee.'"

"Thank you; thank you a thousand times!" cried Granville, rapping the table. "My conscience is relieved, and I will not send back the licence, as I was thinking of doing. Confess, Honora, that yours is relieved too—

'Thou being a goddess, I foreswore not thee.'"

"Upon my word," observed the lady, "I never knew a better get-off."

"Mr. De Clifford always had the art of bringing Shakespeare beautifully to his aid," said Bertha. "It is not the first time I have heard him do so."

These words were music to me, for I thought of the York brook.

"As we are both so obliged to him," added Lady Hungerford, "being both so scrupulous in conscience, we ought both to reward him; though, for my own part, I know not how."

"Nor I," said Granville, "except by wishing, if he too has made a vow of celibacy, he may have just the same reason for breaking it as I have."

Here Lady Hungerford rewarded him with a look worth a diadem.

"I have made no vow of celibacy," said I; but whether I have or not, the consequences will, I fear, be the same."

"I see not why," observed Lady Hungerford.

"The road to heaven is difficult," I answered; "yet no other will I, or can I, take. I must therefore for ever stand still."

Here a long pause ensued, and there seemed a consciousness upon us all; but though I watched Bertha, I could make no discovery. A reserve, which I heard had lately become habitual, since her father's illness, or rather since her brother's death, was in no point relaxed; and whether I had made any way with her or not, it was quite beyond me to decide. I was therefore not sorry when she made the signal for retiring; though I could not make out a reason for a more formal courtesy than usual, as she passed me to quit the room.

I observed this to Granville when we were alone, and asked him if he knew the reason, or whether Mr. Hastings had apprized her of Mansell's intentions.

"Poor girl," said he, "she has certainly been much harassed—what with her fears for her father, what with the prince, and what with you."

"With me!" cried I; "how can any thing connected with me have affected her?"

"You forget the danger you underwent for her sake," said Granville, "and the effect such gallantry must always have upon a young girl, even if she were not one of the most grateful and sensitive of her sex. When the news came, she was absolutely shattered with it; and she has since confessed to Lady Hungerford, that she has been doubly smitten in conscience ever since, for what she now thinks the unkindness of her conduct to you when you left her, as you both thought for ever, two or three years ago. She has also reproached herself with not having been able to thank you as she ought. Hence, no doubt, she cannot treat you with that perfect exemption from constraint which she otherwise might shew. I do not, however, bid you augur any thing from this; particularly favourable to your views. She is perhaps afraid of you, after all that has passed; and we are often afraid of people whom either we think we have used ill, or to whom we feel too much obliged. Mansell's arrival will certainly not add to her freedom of manner with you or anybody else."



In short, you must rest upon your oars, and watch the chapter of accidents."

"This cub of a cousin's visit," said I, musing upon this speech of Granville's, "is unlucky; for I have but a week, in which there will be much to do for us all. Pray heaven Mr. Hastings may not be overset with it."

"He is a good deal already," replied Granville. "The letter of his illustrious nephew has had the effect I predicted. His offer, to use his words, to take Bertha without a fortune, in consideration of his losses——"

"The only redeeming feature I know of in him," said I, "had it not been so vulgarly expressed."

"So I think," observed Granville; "but so does not think Mr. Hastings, who considers it as a bitter affront, which would induce him, he says, to forbid his visit at once, but that he thinks himself bound to lay his pretensions before her who alone is to judge of them. "Here, however," said the lofty old gentleman, "I feel safe. Bertha will not degrade herself in degrading *me*." At the same time," added Granville, "he is embarrassed by Mansell being accompanied by his sister, whom Bertha is, with reason, fond of, and who has no doubt undertaken to be her brother's advocate with her. Altogether," concluded Granville, "it is most provokingly untoward, both to Lady Hungerford and me."

"To say nothing of your humble servant," said I; and we rose from table.

Every thing about the house now assumed a sort of mysterious air; everybody was occupied, and yet, seemingly, nothing visible. Mr. Hastings was closeted with his daughter; Granville, with Lady Hungerford; the servants, with those of Mansell and his sister, who had preceded them, and were settling their rooms.

This lasted some time. I felt deserted, and in the way; and to relieve my own abstraction, as well as enjoy the fresh air of the evening, I sallied by myself, as I did once before, into the well-known flower-garden. Here I would have avoided the summer-house, for which I had imbibed an unaccountable terror, but seeing a female descending the steps, from the alcove, I, with some little emotion, imagining it might be Bertha, turned towards it, but found it was my friend Mrs. Margaret. She had gone there, she said, for her

mistress's pretty bonnet, which had lain there forgotten for two days, and would be quite spoiled by the damp at night.

"But," added she, depositing the bonnet on a garden bench, "I really don't know what's come to dear Miss Bertha about her things, which she minds no more now, than if they just cost nothing at all. Indeed, she seem never to know where she leave them, and be quite changed as to that; for formerly she were, perhaps, too particular, and would almost scold me, if she *could* scold anybody (bless her, dear young lady!), if I happened to forget them. But that prince—his highness—have, I think, turned us all quite beside ourselves; and then Mr. Granville, and her ladyship; and poor dear master, not yet recovered; and all I don't know what beside, have quite put her out—turned her and me too, I may say, topsy-turvy. Ah! Sir, things were not so once; before young Master Charles met his death so sorrowful; but we are glad you so nobly revenged him on that lord, as, to be sure, you felt justified for it, and yet that lord, too, wanted to marry Miss Bertha. Dear me, how she is beset, and she can fancy nobody; and now they do say—but I suppose, Sir, you know; you have heard——"

I had not been acquainted with Mrs. Margaret so long, as not to know that to stop her when once set a-going was as impossible as to do so by an alarm clock, and that the only way was, as with that, to let her run down of herself. I, however, did not reflect, that by putting a question I should wind her up again, or perhaps I should not have said, in answer to her long address,

"Indeed, my good Margaret, I know nothing, and have heard nothing; what do you mean?"

"Dear me," returned she, "and you can't guess about Mr. Mansell—another cousin? Sure love for her runs in the family; for if it had not been for her ladyship, I always used to think Mr. Granville would have offered, and she always used to favor him more than anybody else, except, indeed, when she was a little girl, when you first came here, and then I thought she liked you best; but them days be all gone and the thing is, what are we to expect now; for Mrs. Dickens, Miss Lucinda's maid, who you must know is my sister, says, there will be a great to-do at this visit, for that it was

no secret at Buntercomb Hall (that is, Squire Mansell's) that the squire meant to marry his cousin; that is, if she would marry him; of which Dickens, and Mr. Sidebottom, his valet, to whom he told it, says, there can be no doubt, as the squire be so rich, and us not half so rich as we were. But, thank God! there is still enough; and I said, says I, to my sister Dickens, 'Don't you be too sure of that; for my Miss Bertha, was she starving—which she ain't—won't marry no one that she don't like, and depend upon it all this fuss will come to nothing.' But then the wonder is, who she *will* marry, for I suppose she must marry somebody. There was first, Sir Harry; and then my lord marquess (him as you shot); and then the prince (and I own I did not think that would be); and now Mr. Mansell. What will come of it, God only knows."

Seeing she had now run herself down again, I was afraid of asking another question, so observed,

"Perhaps it is not necessary that any thing should come of it, especially as Miss Hastings is so devoted to her father."

This, I thought, would close the conversation; but she would not be so let off, for she immediately rejoined,

"That is very true; but then, Lord bless me, Mr. Hastings, poor, dear gentleman, is far from well, and, at any rate, can't live for ever, and then who will she have to comfort and protect her, dear young lady?"

To this I did not think proper to answer, and was moving away, when she fixed me, spite of myself, by saying at once—

"Now, I have a fancy in my head, that would be best of all; and that is, that, as you are now such a grand gentleman, and certainly cannot deny all that you said when you were deleerous, the very best thing that could happen would be for you and my young lady to make up a match together; and that's what poor Madame Porte, the governess that's gone used to say—though to be sure it was only in joke—when you used to dance together, and Madame used to call you charming *enfant*, which they say means an infant, though you were then near as high as you are now, and no more an infant than I am."

Here the good Margaret was completely done; and, as I

felt more and more the impropriety of this sort of conference, I put an end to it at last by saying,

My good friend, thanking you for all your good news and your good wishes, I do not think Miss Hastings would be pleased with you for talking thus; besides, the dews are beginning to rise, and that pretty bonnet you were so anxious to rescue from the damp of the summer-house seems likely to be absolutely drowned in its present place of safety."

This appeal to her, in her capacity of mistress of the robes, did more to stop her than that to her discretion, and snatching up the bonnet, which she said she was afraid would require new ribbons, she allowed herself to retire from the gossip she so dearly loved.

For my part, though she had told me nothing new, I could not help revolving what she said of the situation of Bertha, evidently any thing but tranquil; nor did I fail to fasten upon the hints, trifling as they were, which shewed that this sagacious *soubrette* had certainly, for some reason in her own mind, entertained a notion which it made my heart dance to think of; and I began to lean seriously to an opinion, that an old waiting-gentle-woman, who had been about her mistress from a child, had full as good a chance of knowing that mistress's inclinations as a friend of her own rank. To be sure, however, I could detect nothing but her own good wishes for me in this instance, and for those I was thankful.

But the noise of wheels, and the trampling of horses rattling through the park, put an end to these speculations and my solitude at the same time, and drove me to the house to observe the arrival of the aspiring Mansell and his sister at the hall. His valet and her *femme de chambre* had already introduced themselves in one carriage, and now his barouche and four, with two outriders, one preceding and one following, thundered for admittance.

It was dusk, and seemingly a hundred lights illuminated the windows to do the new suitor honour. For though his letters to Granville and his uncle were not six hours old, yet the harbingers who had brought them had had too much of the spirit of their vocation not to let out their suspicions, which suspicions, turned into certainties, were now known to every servant of the house. Hence all had been for sometime on the watch, and were now advanced to do honour to this

squire of high degree, who, on the strength of his eight thousand a-year, came like Jupiter in a shower of gold, to take possession of his Danes.

For any part, I had no feeling but of great curiosity. As to any fear of his success, I was perfectly tranquil. How different from my feelings when the mere sight of Prince Adolphus on the road filled me with terror!

Granville did the honours of the reception, for Mr. Hastings pleaded his weak state, and Bertha had shut herself up in her chamber. Lady Hungerford was not called upon, and was particularly disinclined to appear; and myself had too little hope to please or be pleased, and indeed, was too little entitled to seem one of the family, to present myself. I remained, therefore, in the music-room, whence I heard the rough abrupt voice, which I had always so disliked, introducing the owner with—

"Granville, my hearty, how are you? How is uncle? how is cousin Bertha? Where are they all? Why one would suppose they did not care for one, any more than you, who did not invite me to your wedding; but you see I am come for all that. By the way, how is my lady? Here, I suppose?"

This volubility could by no means be stopped, and like Mrs. Margaret's, could only be allowed to go down of itself; for, while going, not all the attempts of Miss Mansell could succeed in obtaining an answer to inquiries, in a very different tone, after her uncle and Bertha.

They were both in deep mourning for their father, though the squire's countenance did not exhibit that of a mourner; and entering the music-room and seeing me, he started as if he had trod on a serpent. However, he put his hand to his hat, which he had not yet taken off, saying,

"Ha! I believe I know you; I met you at York, didn't I? A friend of Granville, who shot Albany for killing poor Charles. All obliged to you for it, no doubt."

Here Miss Mansell interposed, and with some displeasure, said,

"Brother, this is not the way to speak to Mr. De Clifford, to whom we are all under obligations. I have the pleasure of knowing him too; I trust he has not forgotten us."

I recognized this speech with the politeness it deserved,

and the bustle being a little over, Margaret brought down a request from her mistress that Miss Mansell would go up to her.

Granville proposed to her brother to accompany him to his chamber, which was accepted, and I was again left alone.

My situation was certainly a peculiar one. A comparative stranger, or at least totally unconnected with a family, far removed from the obscurity of mine, with whom it never had had intercourse, yet forming, as it were, a part of it, from being its only favoured guest on an occasion so solemn, that few besides near relations are ever invited ; moreover destined to be on the spot in one of the most trying scenes of domestic history, an offer of alliance with the heiress of the family, calling forth all that could interest its feelings or prospects :—for me, almost a wanderer, little better than an adventurer, though a successful one, to be in this situation, moved my astonishment, and I felt as if I was in a dream. I at least felt that I was not in my place, and had no business here ; and though the furniture of the room recalled, as it always did, very intense impressions of such early times, that it told me I was not the stranger I thought myself, still I could not shake off the uncomfortable lowness and want of support that suddenly came over me. The whole house seemed occupied, full of interests which did not in their opinion concern me ; of me all were independent ; Mr. Hastings absorbed in family views, Bertha in most exciting communication with Lucinda, Mansell with Granville, Lady Hungerford engrossed with her own impending crisis, certainly any thing but in connection with me ; even the servants taken up with one another, regardless of the solitary guest in the music-room, and perhaps wondering what business he had there.

All this had an indescribable effect upon me, and I almost wished myself away. Nor was I at all consoled when the butler came in to say that the ladies not being able to attend the tea-table, Mr. Hastings feeling ill, and the other gentlemen very busy, Mrs. Margaret would, if I pleased, make tea for me in her room, and he would bring it without delay.

The tea I declined ; but it is extraordinary how this little demonstration of what I thought abandonment, in my then state of mind, affected me. I never felt so forlorn. How unequally do we appear framed for the exigencies of our na-

ture, according to the state of our nerves or temper, when they overtake us. When I went out to meet Lord Albany, I thought it was to certain death ; yet I went with a sort of triumph ; here, because half-a-dozen persons were too much occupied with their own interests to attend to mine, and I was left alone for half an hour, I felt abandoned by the world.

An end, however, was at last put to my solitude, and my uneasiness with it, by the approach of Granville and Mansell, who, as usual, not minding who heard him, and talking loud as he crossed the hall, observed, in any thing but a whisper,

"It does not signify ; faint heart never won fair lady, or, as we used to say in the grammar, '*fortuna favet fortibus* ;' and with this they entered the room.

Here the squire lamented that he had come an hour too late ; "for I wanted you," said he to Granville, "to see my new set of bays. Four such prime ones were never seen on York course, and so Lord Greenturf was forced to say, though he looked blue with jealousy. Cost a hundred-and-twenty a-piece, as well as the two grooms' nags, who match exactly, so that at any time I can start six ; and when you come to Buntercomb, I will shew you such stables ; I pulled down the old ones the moment the old gentleman died. It was provoking that you and Bertha did not see the cattle when we drove up ; I thought she might be at the window, but the days do shorten confoundedly in August. By the bye, what sort of a smith have you got here, for I am sorry to say a shoe of one of the leaders is loose ?"

In this way went on this accomplished ornament of the West Riding, and I only heartily wished that the object of his aspirations had heard every word he uttered. Was I too vain in thinking that, though I could not descant so glibly on coach horses, I might enter the lists with him in any thing else ?

As the travellers had had no dinner, an early supper was ordered to be prepared for them ; and as Bertha was still engaged with Miss Mansell, the squire said he would go and inspect his cattle's berths in the stables, an evening ceremony which he always performed himself, and one of the most rational he did perform.

While gone, Granville informed me that the critical communication had been made to Bertha, not only by her father,

who had added not a word on the subject, leaving her to be sole judge of it, but by Mansell's letter, which he had insisted upon Granville's presenting. And as I was afterwards fortunate enough to see this precious epistle, perhaps, while fresh with the subject, it may not be inopportune to set it forth here.

"DEAR AND CHARMING COUSIN,

"I have always so much admired you, that you have made me do what I did not think of doing, for four or five years at least—that is, resolve to marry; and I trust this will plead something in my favour, for a young heir, just come into eight thousand a-year (any part of which you please shall be settled upon you), might perhaps look to a few years' liberty, before he tied himself up. But I consulted Lucinda upon it, and she advised it, and moreover, it was some of her books that made me resolve upon it; for she lent me 'Sir Charles Grandison' to read, which, though rather long, by skipping Clementina, and reading nothing but about Harriet, I got through it in about two months. You must know, I thought you very much like Harriet, particularly when you blushed, which she was always doing, till she got married, which is the way I believe of young ladies. I thought too I was in some things like Sir Charles—that is, he seems always to have had a handsome chariot and six, and always two, if not three, outriders; but he did not hunt with old Selby, which I should have done, and he certainly fenced better than I can, and loved it more, but that's all out now.

"Well, reading this book made me feel queer about you, and though Lucinda did not seem to think I should succeed (I am sure I don't know why, for I don't think you will get a better match), she said she would not oppose my going over to Foljambe to make the offer, saying I could be but refused, which was very friendly of her. What was more, she said she would go with me; so between us both, and particularly as your fortune is so hurt, I hope you will except me for better for worse.

"If you do, as Granville is to be married in a week, and one trouble will serve, I think we had better all be joined together at the same time. Be assured I will make you a



better husband than any of those lords you have refused;  
and so believe me, dear Bertha,

"Your affectionate cousin,

"MARTIN MANSELL.

"*Buntercomb Hall,*

Aug. 4, 178—.

"N. B. I have told your father I want nothing down; but I suppose he will settle the Foljambe property on us and our children."

It may be supposed how likely such a letter was to make a favourable impression on such a being as she to whom it was addressed. But for Lucinda's visit, she would have entreated her father to dismiss him the house; and Lucinda herself, who had not seen the letter, but to whom it was shewn by Bertha, gave the thing up.

That lady had never been sanguine as to her brother's success; but being sincerely fond of her cousin, so as ardently to desire the closer alliance, could it be effected, and thinking really there were some good points in her brother, which, if his coarseness could be put up with, might redeem him, she had hoped, though faintly, that she might do his suit some service by accompanying him on his visit. But this letter closed all the hope she had entertained, and she had nothing to reply to the instant and decided rejection of Bertha, founded upon such a total dissimilarity of character.

Her only remaining endeavour, therefore, was to stand between her brother and his uncle's indignation, which was disposed to shew itself in no measured terms; in which, with some difficulty, owing to Mr. Hastings' great respect for her, she succeeded.

For appearance' sake, she made suit to Granville to ask permission of Lady Hungerford for herself and Mansell to attend their nuptials; which, as her prudence suggested, being no more than a natural proceeding, would cover his failure and let him down softly.

But, whatever Mansell's good points, his prominent feature being a churlish vanity, exalted to its height by his accession to fortune, he would not admit, any more than he could understand, the lenitives his sister proposed. Resolving, therefore, to quarrel out right with his relations for what he called

their ill usage of him, he thought it a noble revenge to quit the house in open anger, and thus proclaim his want of success to the world at large.

He therefore gave orders for an immediate departure, which he was only prevented from carrying into effect that very night by the influence of his more sober-minded sister.

This, however, occasioned horror and disappointment to Mrs. Dickens, and her colleague, Mr. Sidebottom, who had comforted themselves with the prospect of a long and jolly sojourn at the park, in all the enjoyment of bridal importance, and lamented the vexation and trouble of repacking the trunks almost in the moment they had finished the pleasanter task of emptying them. The confusion of the whole house may be imagined; the supper was altogether disdained by the high-minded squire, who ordered Sidebottom to attend him with brandy and water in his own room, where he opened his griefs to him, as for want of a better confidant, he generally did.

His sister remained half the night with Bertha; Lady Hungerford, much discomposed, sought her own apartment; Granville was occupied with softening his uncle; and I, again finding myself *de trop*, began a second time to wish myself away.

The next morning the sun shone bright. The four bays, of a hundred-and-twenty pounds a-piece, were at the door at six, and looked so bright and pawed the ground so proudly, that the squire's pride was somewhat revived, and the ferocity with which he leapt into the barouche softened on going off in such beautiful style. The place, however, he swore never to see again; and so ended this new alarm, and the amatory expedition of the squire of Buntercomb Hall to Foljambe Park.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

MY CONSCIENCE ACCUSES ME TO BERTHA AND HER FATHER.—RAILLERY AND BEAUTIFUL TENDERNESS SHOWN BY LADY HUNGERFORD.

I have heard  
That guilty creatures at a play,  
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,  
Been struck so to the soul, that presently  
They have proclaimed their malefactions.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

THE peace of the family was now resumed. Mr. Hastings and his daughter felt relieved from a severe invasion of their quiet; and Lady Hungerford and her betrothed were left to the delights of privacy in their most interesting of all situations, more and more exciting as the day of their nuptials approached. They were so wrapped up in one another, that they seldom appeared to the family, except at meals: and as Mr. Hastings' invalid state kept him frequently from being visible, it was scarcely possible for Bertha and myself, spite of the precautions she thought herself bound to adopt to avoid it, not to be thrown sometimes together.

Yet, she avoided it even with ingenuity; for if she could not refuse to Granville and Lady Hungerford the pleasure of walking together alone, and she either retired to the summer-house herself, or sought an airing in the park, on one pretence or other she always took Margaret with her as an attendant, and, in the house, she was always in her own, or her father's apartment.

In the latter only was I allowed the delight of her society, and to listen to the charm of her conversation, which flowed in the easy accents of a pure and natural mind, so as only to render her beauty still more fascinating.

Women, indeed, they say, have a natural eloquence; but I cannot describe how winningly Bertha's seemed a part of her very nature; so that, added to the expression of her sea-

tures while conversing, she then seemed to have sat for a picture I always thought too lovely to be real, till I saw and heard her.

"Her voice had magic sweetness in its sound ;  
Her modest eyes appeared afraid to wound ;  
And yet so cheerful was her artless guise,  
Gay could she look, and then had laughing eyes ;  
But when she spoke, such honied words she'd find,  
As all unweeting stole away the mind."

Of this I was made more than ever sensible when admitted to form one of a party with herself and father, and the time so passed seemed moments of sunshine, in which I absolutely basked ; for here, free from all constraint, she indulged in the expression of thoughts which denoted a justness of understanding, as well as a sensibility of feeling, which, like the song of the Sirens,

"Took the prison'd soul,  
And lapt it in elysium."

Many of these thoughts arose spontaneously in her own breast, but many more from the cultivation of those elegant studies, for which the retirement hitherto of her life, and her constant intercourse with her refined friend, had afforded so many opportunities. What struck me was, that although her reading was various, in various languages, and her memory retentive, she knew no trash, but had confined herself to masters alone. Hence very modern authors had little share of her acquaintance. I speak, however, as I once spoke before, of above a half a century ago, when Hayley and Della Crusca were the leaders in fashionable literature.

On these occasions her father was a delighted listener as well as myself. Indeed it had been long her amiable province to soothe his couch by reading to him from her favorite authors, many of which, when I first was admitted to this most rational, as well as most engaging occupation, lay upon the table, either not yet removed, though finished, or waiting in their order to be read.

Among these, the morning after the retreat of the squire, I found a volume of Otway had been selected by Mr. Hastings himself, for the sake of recalling to his memory the touching acting of Mrs. Barry in Belvidera. I, who had just

witnessed the witchery of Mrs. Siddons in the same character (then in her early days), was pleased to find it was appointed for that morning's reading, and forestalled the happiness of hearing it from the lips of Bertha. But she disappointed me, partly because she had not studied the play (for she generally studied beforehand whatever she read to her father), chiefly from modesty, her own pure attribute, which forbade her, she said, from attempting such a display.

"And so," said Mr. Hastings, "though I have two young people who can read, I am to lose my play because each, I suppose, is afraid of the other."

"Mr. De Clifford," observed Bertha, "has shewn no fear; and as he has so lately seen what is said to be the perfection of acting in this very play, he has the less excuse if he refuse to please *you*, and instruct *me*, by being so good as to read it."

Thus called upon, though I really felt a sort of nervousness on account of my audience, I could not decline, and took up the book.

I have been thus particular, only to introduce the strange and unforeseen feeling which some of the scenes occasioned in my own mind; and, as I could not help thinking, in Bertha too, if I might not also add Mr. Hastings himself.

Here was what Fothergill would call a *mesalliance*, against the consent of the father of the lady. That father, too, had, before it happened, covered the bridegroom with favour and protection. No very great difference, thought I, from my own case. His indignation and resentment were proportionably severe, even to cruelty, in the total abandonment of his daughter to ruin and degradation. His curses were shocking, and the agonizing misery of the tragedy all arises from this forbidden marriage.

I own, as I advanced, my senses were sadly diverted to my own case, at least as I had sometimes fancied it, could I have succeeded in my wishes for Bertha; nor was I unmindful of the feelings and character of Jaffier (who, I could not help thinking, would then have been the Clifford of the play), as they unfolded themselves in the strong language of the poet. Thus, in the very opening, I thought I heard Mr. Hastings instead of Priuli, when he exclaims,

"No more ! I'll hear no more ; begone and leave me."

Of course, I applied the answer of Jaffier to myself.

"Not hear me ! by my suffering but you shall.

My lord, my lord ! I'm not that abject wretch

You think me. Patience ! where's the distance throws

Me back so far, but I may boldly speak,

In right, though proud oppression will not hear me ?

So far so good, for Jaffier ; but then the answer hit hard.

"Have you not wrong'd me in the nicest point,

The honour of my house ?"

This cut pretty deeply ; but mark how it went on—

"When you first came home

From travel, with such hopes as made you looked on

By all men's eyes ; a youth of expectation ;

Pleased with your growing virtue, I received you,

Courted, and sought to raise you to your merits ;

My house, my table, nay my fortune too,

My very self was your's ; you might have used me

To your best service, Like an open friend

I treated, trusted you, and thought you mine,

When, in requital of my best endeavours,

You treacherously practised to undo me,

Seduced the weakness of my age's darling,

My only child, and stole her from my bosom."

This touching speech, touching spite of the cruel sternness, that afterwards so bitterly revenged the father on his child, whether from its own intrinsic pathos, or the application I made of it to what *might* have been my own case, affected me so much that I faltered, and for a moment could not get on ; and whether the sympathy which this occasioned, or the unhappiness thus wrung from the injured Priuli, produced the effect, the eyes of both father and daughter seemed ready to run over.

"You read too feelingly," said Mr. Hastings. "I am afraid this won't do for an old man like me. However, my little Bertha there will never turn Belvidera, so I will not fear being Priuli."

"Mr. De Clifford does indeed read these terrible reproaches feelingly, and would almost make us hate Jaffier," observed Bertha, while her countenance shewed a thousand emotions, which she vainly attempted to hide. "I know not," continued she, "what is to come of this play, if the interest begins so early to be so powerful. But pray go on."

I obeyed, with the account which Jaffier gives of the cause of Belvidera's affection for him, his having saved her life—

“For from that hour she loved me,  
And for her life she paid me with herself.”

“A payment perhaps,” observed Mr. Hastings, “not undeserved, had she only done the common justice due to a father who doated upon her, by asking his consent. What says my dear Bertha?”

“That, with all her tenderness for her husband, I will never be Belvidera,” replied Bertha, “But again, pray go on,”

I did so, but had not much pleasure in the next speech, which did not raise Jaffier in our opinions, though it made us shudder at the dreadful imprecations of Priuli—

“You stole her from me; like a thief you stole her;  
At dead of night: that cursed hour you chose,  
To rife me of all my heart held dear.  
May all your joys in her prove false like mine!  
A sterile fortune and a barren bed  
Attend you both; continual discord make  
Your days and nights bitter and grievous; still  
May the hard hand of a vexatious need  
Oppress and grind you, till at last you find  
The curse of disobedience all your portion.”

“This is too horrible,” said Bertha; “and I really did not think, Mr. DeClifford, you could read so stern a part so sternly. Wrong as she was, poor Belvidera was here too much punished. What says papa?”

“I know not, dear,” answered Mr. Hastings; “for, thanks to Heaven and you, I know not what it is to have a disobedient daughter.”

At this he smiled more sweetly than I thought he *could* smile, and that smile irradiated the whole countenance of his daughter with a joy that made her look like an angel.

The horrors, however, went on, and both father and daughter shuddered when Priuli, being told of his grandchild, wishes him to live, to “bait them for his bread, and din their ears with hungry cries”—

“Whilst his unhappy mother  
Sits down and weeps in bitterness of want.”

The unrelenting, fiendish old man, when Jaffier wishes himself in his grave, adds,

"And she too with thee;  
For, living here, you're but my curs'd remembrancers."

At this Bertha seemed struck with terror, and even Mr. Hastings in a voice of agony exclaimed, "This is too much!"

Some pity now, however, arose for Jaffier, when he said, with something like dignity—

"You use me thus because you know my soul  
Is fond of Belvidera. You perceive  
My life feeds on her; therefore thus you treat me."

Here Bertha became more than ever attentive, particularly where Jaffier asks, if he were a thief, what should hinder him to send her back with contumely,

"And court his fortune where she would be kinder?"

But when Priuli says, "he *dare* not do it," her whole heart seemed melted by the simple words of the reply—

"Indeed, my lord, I dare not;  
My heart that awes me is too much my master."

My own feelings indeed responded to this, when, as I could not help, I made the case my own, and thought the question was of Bertha instead of Belvidera.

These applications made the play too powerful for me, even before the appearance of Belvidera. But when, in the close of the first act, her conjugal tenderness is so feelingly described, and Jaffier, in his gratitude, bursts into that ebullition of admiration for the sex, elicited by his love for his wife, which had charmed me so often, it was not easy for me to be so close to the exemplification of its justice, and proceed with calmness. In fact, I looked at Bertha more than at the book, when I repeated rather than read—

"Oh! woman! lovely woman! Nature made thee  
To temper man: we had been brutes without you:  
Angels are painted fair to look like you:  
There's in you all that we believe of heaven,  
Amazing brightness, purity and truth,  
Eternal joy and everlasting love."



This glowing picture of all that I had so long loved, while the object of it was seated so close to me, and in every turn of her countenance shewed its fidelity, so overpowered me, that, no longer master of myself, the book fell from my hands, and little was wanting to shew what was passing within me.

"It is nothing," said I, seeing my friends under some anxiety, thinking I was ill. "A little air will cure all this."

And Bertha anticipated me in opening the door into the garden. I returned to the book, and would have resumed it; but both father and daughter protested against it, and Mr. Hastings proposed that Bertha should go on with the play.

"That would disgrace me," said I.

"I am sure it would *me*," observed Bertha. "I never knew what it was that gave Otway the character of pathetic before. No; I will never pretend to read him aloud."

At this moment the butler announced it was twelve o'clock, and that the pony-chair was ready.

"I am glad of it," said Bertha; "for the mere opening of this sad tale has upset me."

"Well," said I, "pray don't upset the pony-chair."

Which Mr. Hastings declared was a *bon mot*, and as Sterne said a *bon mot* was always worth a pinch of snuff, he offered me his box.

Left to myself in the library, I more than ever revolved my situation, and found it only the more dangerous, from the very circumstances which I had courted at a distance with so much ardour; I mean the disappearance of all uncertainty as to Bertha's engagement, and the wonderful changes in my own fortune. Had these difficulties continued, all that would have been left me would have been to have submitted to my fate as a matter of necessity, which, in time, I might have accomplished. But these being done away, and the ground left fairly open, my hopes were no longer occupied with any thing extraneous, or beyond my control, but were all centred in the one powerful question, dependant upon my own merits and pretensions, the decision of which could not now be far off.

This was the fearful point at which I had arrived. In this agitated state I had continued a full hour; when, by way of diversion of thought, I took down from the bookshelves, not a sermon, or Seneca's *Morals*, which courted my first notice, but a volume of Sir Charles Sedley's amatory poems; and in

conning these over I was surprised by Lady Hungerford, who had returned from her ride, during which she had fallen in with Mr. Hastings and Bertha.

My surprise may be imagined, when, rather abruptly (perhaps, for her, indiscreetly), she accosted me with—

“Well, Mr. DeClifford, I find you have this morning gained Bertha’s heart.”

I started at the words, looked pale and red, and began to stammer out my wonder, when she cooled all by saying,

“There I have done wrong; I never considered how little you sanguine people can bear to be metaphorically treated, and how matter-of-fact every thing ought to be that alludes to your feelings. Know then, that by gaining the lady’s heart, I meant nothing but her praise (and give me leave to tell you, that is no light thing), for the manner in which you read Otway this morning.”

“And did she not add, how like a simpleton I behaved—that a green school-girl could not have done worse?”

“She said you frightened her by being taken ill, but I heard nothing of being a simpleton.”

On this I could not help recounting to my kind protectress all that had oppressed my fancy, in regard to my own case, as the play proceeded, till at last it overcame me—when she observed,

“This will never do. Why, in nerves, cousin Mansell would beat you hollow; and, had he chosen to stay, with such inconvenient feelings as yours, might have proved a powerful rival.”

“And would you have me discard those feelings?”

“Not exactly; but I would not have them prevent action at a crisis where action is necessary. Though you are in love with Miss Hastings, I suppose, you do not expect Miss Hastings to be in love with you, without knowing any thing about the matter; or that she should throw herself at your feet, when you ought to be at hers? I doubt, if she did, if you would love her half so well. Consider, she is one of those

‘Who would be woo’d, and not unsought be won.’”

“O!” returned I, “play not with my feelings. If I thought

that seeking her would find her—find her what I wish—how could I ever cease the pursuit till what I wish was crowned?”

“Bravely spoken,” replied the lady; “but depend upon it, to let fall your book in a tremor, for fear of shadows of your own creating, is not the way to succeed.”

“May I look upon this as encouragement?”

“If by that word you wish to ask if I know any thing of my friend’s heart towards you, in the first place, let me say that if I did I would not tell you; but, in the next, let me say I do not. That she esteems you—thanks you—wishes you happy, as her father does too—and thinks you read Otway charmingly—is certain. Beyond this I know nothing.”

“Can you then tell me nothing *favourable* to my hopes?”

“No.”

“Am I to despair?”

“No.”

“Would you have me propose this instant?”

“No.”

“Alas! then what am I to do?”

“Go on; but let no more books fall in a fright.”

Thus did this dear lady, I will not say amuse herself by playing with my feelings, but (perhaps without intending it) tantalize me with alternate encouragement and depression, for so I considered this conversation.

She wound it up with a strange ironical request, which her own happy spirits on her approaching nuptials, I suppose, prompted, that I would put into writing, and present to Bertha, a statement of the particular beauty of person or mind for which I so loved her; and, as I seemed so afraid of presenting such a thing myself, she said she would be my ambassadress, and present it for me.

I received this, as it was proposed, jestingly; but having only that moment laid down the poems I had been reading, I took them up again and said,

“Sedley shall answer for me, for I agree with him in every one of these lines, only changing the name of Chloris for Bertha.

‘Chloris, I cannot say your *eyes*  
Did my unwary heart surprise;  
Nor will I swear it was your *face*,  
Your *shape*, or any nameless *grace*;

For you are so entirely fair,  
 To love a part, injustice were.  
 No drowning man can know which drop  
 Of water his last breath did stop;  
 So when the stars in heav'n appear,  
 And join to make the night look clear;  
 The light we no *one's* bounty call,  
 But the obliging gift of all.

'He that does lips or hands adore,  
 Deserves *them* only, and no more;  
 But I love *all*, and every part,  
 And nothing less can ease my heart.  
 Cupid *that* lover weakly strikes,  
 Who can express what *'tis* he likes.'

"Upon my word," said the lady, "you shew yourself a promising pupil of your master, Granville. I don't think *he* could have answered better. But give me the book, for the lines are very pretty, and I must shew them to him."

At that moment he joined us, but only to take his mistress away with him to billiards. Oh! how I envied him!

How did that envy increase as time advanced, though envy is not the proper name for it, for I seriously rejoiced. His position, however, made my own more restless, and it seemed unreasonable, nay, almost unnatural, that I should not feel the same contentment that he did.

His betrothed looked handsomer every hour, as *the* hour approached; handsomer as her consciousness increased. Yet at one time, instead of being, as she generally was, radiant with smiles, I found her in tears—Granville by her side.

Mr. Hastings and Bertha were taking their morning's drive, and I had settled, by way of a ride, to go to York, though it did not take place. They were in the music-room, thinking they should be alone, when I interrupted them.

I quickly retired, lost in wonder at what could have occasioned the emotions I witnessed. At first I thought they had had a quarrel (such things have happened), and a lover's quarrel is proverbial. Yet they seemed the tears of extreme tenderness, not of bitterness; and Granville, who told it me, lest I should misconstrue them, said they were really so.

In fact, as the day approached when this charming woman was to give herself up to another, the remembrance of her first lord occupied her mind almost to absorption. He had always loved her so devotedly, and with such perfection of

esteem, that she had begun to tremble with fear that the step she was about to take might be deemed ungrateful to his memory. Granville's tender attentions too, increasing as the day of his happiness drew nigh, her fears and conscious associations also augmented; and though far from repenting, still farther from retracting, the recollection of the tenderness of him who first possessed her love, mixed something like compunctious doubts as to the strict propriety of her present conduct, with the softness of her remembrance of the past.

This she ingeniously owned to Granville, together with all she had felt of former happiness with Lord Hungerford.

"Yes," said she, "though greatly older than myself, I loved him, not only with all the devotion of the respect he commanded from every one, but even with all the fondness he could desire. His mind and his heart were both young, and his inestimable worth heightened my feelings into real passion. You must not expect more, therefore, from me than I gave to him. Though the eight years that have passed since he was lost to me have allayed the poignancy of grief, and though I have admitted you to my heart, it is impossible that I can displace him from it, or cease to love his memory. If I thought, therefore, he could now look down upon me with displeasure, for being able to love you, the heart I give you would be a desolate one."

"Here," said Granville, "she was so overcome as to produce those emotions in which you surprised us. Truth is, we neither of us had ever thought of discussing the question of second marriages; I, from being too happy to make any question about it; she, from the perpetual example of the world, till awakened by the near approach of the ceremony, and its association with his memory, who had so entirely possessed her esteem and affection. For my own part," concluded Granville, "I only honored her, nay, loved her more and more for it; and when she uttered something like an excuse, and a hope that this overtake would not hurt me, I told her with a full heart that she only raised herself higher than ever with me, as it did myself in my own mind, for having been able to win the affection of so sweet a character. With this she was satisfied, and we are better friends than ever."

I was quite penetrated by this account, and regarded Lady Hungerford with even more than usual admiration. That

one so superior to almost all her sex in every thing that the world deemed desirable—brilliant, elegant, full of rich talent, and with almost a masculine understanding, formed for public display—should in reality possess also the soft and feminine graces that so charm us in private life, moved my wonder, and more than ever excited my attachment. I could only more than ever congratulate my friend on his good fortune.

Nothing remarkable passed during the rest of the day, except the finishing of *Venice Preserved*, which, though moving both for horrors and for tenderness, yet as they did not draw forth anything that bore upon my own case, I pass them.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

DISCOURSE WITH BERTHA ON CONJUGAL DUTY.—BEAUTIFUL AND JUST, BUT NOT BLUE.

My noble father !

I do perceive here a divided duty.

SHAKESPEARE.—*Othello*.

ONE only day now remained, before the fates of Granville and that admirable woman, whose winning qualities I have so often described, were to be united. The day was spent in pleasing, yet awful, and in some respects sorrowful, preparation ; pleasing and awful to the parties most concerned, who were to leave Foljambe from the church door ; sorrowful to those who staid behind.

Granville and Lady Hungerford, as may be supposed, were occupied with one another, at least, as much as their gentleman and lady of the bed-chamber would permit them. These, in arranging matters both for the ceremony and their departure afterwards, seemed by far the principal characters in the drama ; but for myself, the chief incident of the morning was another reading in Mr. Hastings' apartments. Here,

forgetting my preceding disaster, I was again requested again to be the lecturer.

The story of poor Belvidera having been finished, Bertha had selected another, which she said she was particularly fond of, and begged me to recite the struggles of Imogen on parting with her husband Posthumus, banished for having married her.

Here was another clandestine match, as well as *mesalliance*; and though the choice was evidently fortuitous, I could not help wondering at my being fated a second time, and so soon, to plunge into scenes so illustrative of my own particular feelings.

Though the king (Cymbeline) had bred up Posthumus in his court, "made him of his bed-chamber," and "put upon him all the learning of his time," in which Imogen seems to have been his approved companion, no sooner were they married than the king hates his daughter.

I own I felt much, and looked keenly at Mr. Hastings, when in his first speech of reproach, Cymbeline calls her a '*disloyal thing*,' that should repair his youth, but had heaped a year's age upon him.

"It seems to have been his own fault," said Mr. Hastings; "for, from what I know of the play, he countenanced the intimacy between his daughter and Posthumus."

"You will find that he did so," said Bertha; "and being so accomplished as 'was her husband, I like her firmness in asserting his superiority to all others, however great."

Upon this I went on, and read—

"Thou might'st have had the sole son of my queen."

"O! blest that I might not! I chose an eagle,  
And did avoid a puttock."

"I think said Mr. Hastings to Bertha, and handling his snuff-box pretty briskly (as he always did when some stirring thought occurred)—"I think if you were Imogen I could give a name to that puttock; but for the eagle I am at a loss."

Bertha's cheek was instantly suffused with crimson; and as neither Mansell nor the prince any longer made her uneasy, I could not tell why. She answered her father, however, by playfully saying, that he ought not to be guilty of personal applications, and begged me to go on. I did so with—

"Thou took'st a beggar ;  
Would'st have my throne a seat for laziness."

"No; I rather added a lustre to it."

"Sir,  
It is *your* fault that I have loved Posthumus.  
You bred him as my play-fellow, and he is  
A man worth any woman; over-buys me  
Almost the sum he pays."

Here again Mr. Hasting began to comment:—"Aye," said he, "here was the great mistake. Cymbeline gave his daughter a play-fellow, one whom he himself had done all he could to make amiable, and then hates her for loving him."

"I knew, dear Sir," replied Bertha, "you would think her excusable for loving him, and I think so too, but not for marrying him without her father's consent."

"That is a good creed for all daughters," observed Mr. Hastings; "mind you always act up to it."

"I trust I shall, Sir," answered Bertha; and from having been easy and almost playful, she became unusually pensive.

I began not to relish the conversation, and went on with the dialogue.

"What! art thou mad?"

"Almost, Sir.—Heaven restore me! Would I were  
A neatherd's daughter, and my Leonatus  
Our neighbor shepherd's son."

"This is downright rebellion," said Mr. Hastings.

"But it is most pathetic," observed Bertha, "and tells a thousand affecting things. A princess to be so disinterested, and humble; though to be sure so noble a husband as Leonatus justified her."

"And yet," remarked her father, "you would no more, I am sure, bid defiance to your parent, than you would throw away your rank in society for the noblest-minded husband."

"I am not sure," replied Bertha, "if you had bred me up with him, and made him my play-fellow, like Posthumus."

"It would destroy all distinction," said Mr. Hastings, "and let in the levellers with a vengeance."

"With submission," said I, "Shakspeare, by this, did not mean that Imogen, *being a princess*, would have become a



mere peasant for the sake of living with Posthumus ; but that she would prefer to have been *born* in a peasant's rank, with a husband she loved, to being the daughter of a king with one she detested."

"I think Mr. De Clifford has well explained," said Bertha.

"Perhaps he has," answered Mr. Hastings, "and no doubt you agree in the explanation."

"That I certainly do," replied she.

"I cannot blame you," said her father ; "but being not a peatherd's daughter, but a gentle-woman, I have no fear of any neighbor shepherd's son."

The conversation here, I thought, had become too grave, and I did not much like the turn it had taken. I was not ill pleased, therefore, when Mr. Hastings said,

"I do not much admire these *unequal* matches, nor yet more, where the old greybeards of fathers are, as usual, brought in growling at their daughters for making them. Priuli was bad enough, and Cymbeline is worse. Give me something more sunshiny—a scene where the choice and the happiness of the parties are equal and mutual, and not leavened by any querulous, peevish papa."

"You at least, dear Sir," said Bertha, "cannot be afraid of such a character ; but I own the result of poor Imogen's marriage is rather too affecting for the day before the bridal morn of our dear friends. There should be none but joyful nuptials in the moment of theirs. Perhaps Mr. De Clifford will find us something more appropriate."

"With all my heart," said Mr. Hastings.

I immediately laid the book down, and took up another volume of the bard, in which seeing *The Merchant of Venice*, I was struck with the wish of presenting the beautiful character of Portia to Bertha ; not, indeed, as a specimen of her own modest and lovely feminineness, but as an example of the strong sense and decision, mixed with softness, and conjugal attachment, which often distinguishes the sex. Portia, as well as Bertha, had been bound by a promise to her father regarding her marriage, which, like Bertha, she was prepared to fulfil, though to her own risk. She, too, with all her energy, had notions, the description of which delights the heart, in respect to the relations of a wife to a husband.

With this view I passed cursorily through the previous scenes till I came to Bassanio's arrival at Belmont, and the instant interest kindled by him in the bosom of Portia. Here I watched the mind of Bertha as it was developed in her manner of feeling and judging of the event. Portia is so afraid of losing Bassanio, as she must do if he chooses the wrong casket, that, with a sweet touch of nature, she begs him to delay the ceremony of choosing:—

“ I pray you, tarry ; pause a day or two,  
Before you hazard ; for in choosing wrong,  
I lose your company ; therefore forbear a-while ;  
There's something tells me—(*but it is not love*)—  
I would not lose you ; and you know yourself,  
Hate counsels not in such a quality.  
But lest you should not understand me well  
(*And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought*),  
I would detain you here some month or two,  
Before you venture for me.”

“ A pretty bold declaration, and honest withal, for a young lady,” observed Mr. Hastings. “ What says Bertha ?”

“ Far too bold,” answered Bertha, “ for one who says

‘ A maiden should have no tongue but thought.’”

“ I concluded you would say so,” I observed ; “ for no young English lady would have so produced herself. But you are to recollect she was an Italian who said it, and not only so, but a great heiress, and almost a queen (indeed, represented as a sovereign in the original novel), and called upon to act and decide for herself in a situation of great publicity, as well as difficulty. She might have been even Amazonian, and not thus out of nature ; and 'tis therefore that the real sweetness, and even humbleness, which we afterwards see belonging to her, please us so much.”

“ Let us have the passages,” said Mr. Hastings ; “ I know she redeems herself.”

I immediately turned to the delightful, dignified, yet modest account of her feelings to Bassanio, on the occasion of his successful choice:—

“ You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
Such as I am. Though for myself alone,  
I would not be ambitious in my wish

To wish myself much better ; yet for you,  
 I would be trebled twenty times myself ;  
 A thousand times more fair—ten thousand times  
 More rich. But the full sum of me  
 Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised ;  
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
 But she may learn ; and happier in this,  
 She is not bred so dull but she *can* learn :  
 Happiest of all is, that her gentle spirit  
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,  
 As from her lord, her governor, and king."

Here breaking off, I could not help saying, that whether as to the sentiment, or the interest it created for the speaker, I thought it among the most beautiful things in Shakspeare.

"One feels it in one's very heart," observed Bertha, who during the whole of these interesting lines marked in the various changes of her complexion, and in every turn of her features, the effect they had upon her head and heart. Her lips, though not audible, shewed by their motion that she was repeating every word within herself ; and when I had finished, the words "charming ! she has indeed redeemed herself," escaped, though in a subdued voice, from her evidently o'er-fraught bosom ; and though she *said* no more, she completely, by the beaming intelligence of her eye, seconded her father when he said,

"A noble girl ! I retract all I said of her forwardness ; she has all the softness, with none of the violence, of Imogen."

"She is, indeed, a heroine," continued Bertha, after a little silent meditation, as if recalling the succeeding scenes ; "but a soft, as well as an energetic one ; and when I think of the accomplishments of her husband, and that all that she afterwards so boldly did, was to relieve his affectionate heart from the insupportable woe of thinking he had destroyed his friend, I can forgive, nay, even admire, her man's attire."

"I believe you, dearest," said Mr. Hastings ; "you would do it even for your father, were he in the same situation."

"It would not be the will that would be wanting," returned Bertha, looking fondly at her parent.

"I believe you there, too, my child," said Mr. Hastings, returning all the fondness of her looks, "for I verily think you would do as much for a father as a husband."

"As I am not married," observed she, half smiling, half seriously, "the experiment luckily cannot be made ; if I were,

I would only pray that I might never be put to the trial ; for though, perhaps, I might be an Imogen, I could not be Belvidera."

"And why not?" asked her parent.

"Belvidera, you know, was the *darling* of her father's age ; and yet she left him 'in the dead of night.' That—whether in day or night—I could not do, whatever the merit of him who sought me. Indeed, the proposal to do so—wronging his benefactor on the tenderest point, when under such obligations to him—would have lowered my opinion of Jaffier, and rather turned me from him. This, and his weakness all through the play, cause a break in the interest, terrible as it is ; and I almost *love*, as well as esteem, Pierre, better than his friend."

How did I not hang on all this ! How intensely did I not wish her to go on, when colouring, as if she was going too far in hazarding a critical opinion, she paused and stopped. Oh, how does not the retiring modesty of a woman enhance the beauty and expression of her sentiments, whatever their justness or rectitude !

"Why does my dear Bertha pause?" said Mr. Hastings, to my great pleasure. "Why does she not go on, and tell us her reason for preferring Imogen to Belvidera?"

"Cymbeline was a tyrant," answered Bertha ; "Priuli, before he was *betrayed*, as I may say, by his daughter, and him he so bountifully protected, the most loving of fathers. His very revenge—so shocking, as to amount almost to madness, and for which he was so dreadfully punished afterwards, by remorse, the severest avenger—proceeded from his absorbing fondness for this child, who left him. But Cymbeline seems to have cared little for his daughter, to whom he had given Posthumus as a play-fellow ; and the attachments of play-fellows are not soon forgotten."

Here she paused again, and, indeed, seemed much disconcerted, for I own I was devouring her with my eyes, while hers were downcast. Recovering at last, she said,

"But I believe I had better not play the critic, papa, but leave you and Mr. DeClifford to settle the merits of the two ladies. All that I mean is, that Posthumus, being of a higher character than Jaffier, and Cymbeline less fond of his daughter than Priuli, I perhaps might have imitated Imogen, but not Belvidera."

"Then, as to Portia?" asked Mr. Hastings, seemingly delighted with her.

"Oh! she is altogether beyond me," replied Bertha, "almost to understand, much more to imitate. She is the noblest of heroines, and yet the gentlest of women. Her masculine exertions to relieve her husband's anguish leave us all behind in energy; yet her profession of what ought to be the feeling of a young creature about to give herself up to the man of her choice,

'As to her lord, her governor, and king,'

seems to belong to the most winning softness. I know nothing like it, even in Shakspeare."

"I love your comments, my child, better than any thing," said Mr. Hastings.

"Except the commentator?" observed I; and if my looks did not express the delight of my heart, I have neither heart to feel, nor looks to express any thing.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

I AM ALARMED AT A CHANGE IN BERTHA.—THE RESULTS  
TO WHICH IT LED.

Not so sick, my lord,  
As she is troubled with thick—coming fancies.  
SHAKSPEARE.—*Macbeth*.

To my astonishment, and probably my reader's too (especially after the last chapter), the next time I saw Bertha exhibited an eclipse of all those lovely beams of pleasure and intelligence which had been prompted by our delightful occupation. At dinner, where I had promised myself the pleasing familiarity which that family meal generally creates, Bertha was distant, timid, and silent, scarcely replying to any thing I directed to her; and her eyes, so far from encountering mine, were for the most part averted.

To me this seemed not less than an eclipse of the sun, which "with fear of change perplexes monarchs." It was most certain that it thoroughly perplexed *me*." It was in vain I sought to account for it. At first, I thought she might be ill; but her looks forbade that, for never had she looked so well. Yet what had happened? Could she be capricious?—No. Did she wish to try her power?—No. To teaze?—No. To play the coquet?—O no!

I did all I could to bring her round. I tried to talk of Portia—she would not join. I asked questions as to Saxony—she knew nothing about it. Lady Hungerford's plans as an ambassadress—she seemed to have lost all interest in them. Never was there so dull a dinner, and never was I so glad to be released by the withdrawal of the ladies.

Willingly could I have left the table and sought the solitude of the park; but this the etiquette of Mr. Hastings, invalid as he was, forbade. He had engaged, prompted, I suppose, by questions about Germany, and Granville's approaching mission there, to give him a full sketch of its manners and politics immediately after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, when he began his travels, which ended in the Saxon alliance. There was no stirring till this was over, when we were summoned to coffee in the drawing-room.

Alas! here I found Bertha, though less distant, and almost striving to be civil, still absent, and far from giving me that frank look of amity, denoting the full intercourse of mind and thought, which had lately so delighted me. On the contrary, she seemed under constraint, and flying to Lady Hungerford, as it were for protection, on my approach.

I felt depressed, but for what reason I could not divine, and was not the happier because I knew her superior both to coquetry and caprice.

Her change was still more marked when, according to custom, music was proposed. It was not that she objected; on the contrary, though she declared against singing, she hastened to look out some instrumental duets; but when Lady Hungerford and Granville proposed vocal music, she opposed it still more, observing she was not equal to it. It was only when Lady Hungerford declared it would be their last vocal treat, perhaps for years, that she yielded, and selected an air of Zingarelli.

"It is beautiful," said Lady Hungerford ; "but, on leaving Foljambe and Yorkshire, and Mr. Granville and Mr. De Clifford on almost the very spot where they composed it, I wish to hear once more that joint production of theirs which you used *once* to like, and sung so well—the stanzas to *Hopeless Love*."

To my disappointment and dismay, Bertha made a thousand excuses. She had neither voice nor spirits ; which Granville said was very affronting ; while I, for my part, stood aloof, wondering what all this could mean, yet thinking it bad taste, as well as being afraid, to add my entreaty to the others.

While doubtful of success, however, Mr. Hastings himself came to the aid of the petitioners, saying it was ungracious to refuse while both author and composer were at her elbow ; and observed how he liked the air, and that he had not heard it for a long time, Bertha could no longer withstand what it absolutely puzzled as well as grieved me to think she had so long resisted. That it was personal to myself or Granville, I could not believe ; yet a sort of confusion in her manner while evading the request, added to the perplexity which her demeanor had occasioned.

In this awkward way (for so I may call it) the stanzas commenced ; but soon all awkwardness fled, and was forgotten in the exquisite pathos of the air, and the feeling which this sweet daughter of harmony could not help infusing into it. We were all breathless while the performance went on, and when it was over, Granville said she had made him in love with his own composition ; to which, rallying, she answered, that was no compliment—it was so easy to do so. But when Lady Hungerford was pleased to approve, and began to read some of the stanzas, she was actually confused, and looked embarrassed.

All was an enigma to me, and not a pleasant one ; yet the composition, and the heightened beauty of the syren, with the justice she did to it, penetrated me to my inmost feeling. Still I said nothing, till Mr. Hastings, who had wheeled his chair close to the instrument, roused me by observing,

"Why, you are not so frank as Granville ; you won't con-

less the pleasure you must feel in the performance of a composition in which you had so great a share."

To this I replied what I sincerely felt, that I thought so much more of the performance than the composition, that I had forgot who were the composers.

At this I observed Bertha looked down, and seemed again embarrassed, from which she was not relieved by what passed on my remarking that I never felt some of Waller's most beautiful lines brought so home to me.

"O! pray let us have them," said Lady Hungerford; "I like Waller's little turns. I suppose they were to Sacharissa?"

"If Chloris was Sacharissa," I replied, "they were; but they are entitled only 'To a lady singing one of his own compositions.'"

But here I stopped for a moment, for at the name of Chloris I observed the confusion, if I may so call it, of Bertha increase; she even blushed "celestial, rosy red," and Lady Hungerford gave her a significant look, while, almost, to relieve her, she begged me to give them the lines I had mentioned. They were these:—

"Chloris, yourself you so excel,  
When you vouchsafe to breathe my thoughts,  
That like a spirit, with a spell  
Of my own teaching I am caught.

"That eagle's fate and mine are one,  
Who on the shaft that made him die  
Espied a feather of his own,  
Wherewith he wont to soar so high."

"Charming!" cried Lady Hungerford. Ingenious Waller!"

"Ingenious Clifford, I think," said Granville; what says *ma petite cousine*?"

And he added in terms to Bertha, that she ought to thank me; which put me rather upon the *qui vive*. Nor was I less so at the reply, when she said,

"I have, indeed, much to thank Mr. De Clifford for, and upon this occasion I can only say that he was always very refined in his compliments, and fully keeps up his reputation."

After this she relapsed into deep pensiveness, which lasted



till she retired for the night, when she accompanied Lady Hungerford to her chamber.

What her last words portended, whether they signified approbation or tacit chiding, whether pleasure or displeasure at my allusion, I could by no means make out. I hoped the first, I feared the last? but the hopes and fears of lovers are too little reducible to reason to be understood, and my conjectures were endless during the night, both as to this, and still more as to the change of manner which had given me such uneasiness.

If not comforted, I was at least relieved from uncertainty the next morning after breakfast, by Granville. Lady Hungerford, it seems, had seen both this change in Bertha, and my dismay at it, and (kind and considerate woman!) had commissioned Granville to explain to me what she thought the cause, as also to beg my forgiveness for having perhaps been the occasion of it.

In short, whether by way of experimenting on the question (which she now owned she had so much at heart), or sheerly in a careless conversational mood, she had informed Bertha of the manner in which, after rallying me on my evident feelings, she had drawn from me the sonnet of Sir Charles Sedley, addressed to Chloris.

"This," said Granville, "had filled Bertha with consternation, and alarmed her delicacy so much, that she feared to engage with you as usual, nay, avoided you, as you saw, and felt particularly unwilling to sing what would so strongly remind you of past scenes."

"She wished those scenes then to be forgotten?" observed I.

"I did not gather that," answered Granville; "but as the remembrance of them seemed called up by herself if she sang the air in question, and coming so immediately after your application of Sedley's lines to her, it filled her with fears, which your own sense of a young woman's delicacy may very well comprehend."

"Well, indeed, can I comprehend," said I, "any thing that connects delicacy with Bertha, and if this were all, I should be satisfied; but I fear I am here 'paltered with in a double sense:' this anxiety for the preservation of delicacy augurs little for my hopes of favour in another sense, if it does

not extinguish them. Am I to understand that her freedom of manner, which so charmed me, can only be restored by her being relieved from all fear of being addressed by me as a lover? If so, I will only pray you to take me back with you to London after the ceremony, or afterwards to Germany; for I shall feel a second time banished from this too interesting place, where indeed I was not wise to hazard myself again."

"Do not talk thus," replied Granville, "for it will deeply hurt Honora, who, as it is, feels that she has not dealt discreetly by you, in revealing whatever was to be revealed by this unfortunate sonnet of Sedley's. She certainly thought it might elicit something of encouragement for you, or she would not have ventured it."

"In which," said I (I fear rather testily), "it seems she did not succeed."

"Bertha was too much alarmed," returned Granville, "to be thoroughly understood, and this alarm, though it indicate nothing certain as to success, is, I think, any thing but discouraging. It indeed cuts both ways, but it shews no indifference, which you yourself once told me was the last thing a lover ought to wish to encounter."

"According to you, then," said I, "if she seduously avoided me, and never spoke to me again, it would be encouragement."

He laughed, but said it was at least not so discouraging as a cold politeness. "However," added he, "the ladies are again closeted, and will be so for some time, as it is not yet Mr. Hastings' hour for appearing; and if you can calm yourself in the meanwhile, till they re-appear, as I have ten thousand things to do preparatory for to-morrow, and must therefore leave you, I would advise you to do so."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

CONFERENCES WITH LADY HUNGERFORD AND GRANVILLE,  
PROMISING TO LEAD TO THE CONSUMMATION OF MY OBJECT.

'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

What say you, Hermia? Be advised, fair maid;  
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

*Midsummer Night's Dream*.

It is very easy for a man, the day before his marriage with the woman of his heart, and all his most favourite prospects in the world opening upon him to boot, to desire another, who is upon tenterhooks, to *calm* himself.

This was my reflection when the happy Granville left me alone to my sorry fancies, while he went to order the ten thousand things necessary for the happy business of the succeeding day.

Meantime I paced for ten weary minutes the eating-room where we had breakfasted; then sallied out and did as much by the hall; then went half-way up stairs, listened, and came down again, all to no purpose. I wondered what the ladies were about; why ladies had so many secrets who had been nearly a month together; why these had any secrets at all, now that one had parted with her lover, and the other was so soon to take a husband. Above all, I wondered why they should prefer being alone, when a young gentleman was waiting below longing to walk and talk with them.

These movements and reflections of mine, however, did not bring them down, and to vary the scene I walked into the flower-garden. There, looking up to the window of *Berthas*, *boudoir*, I saw Lady Hungerford affectionately embracing her, both ladies, as far as I could make out, a good deal agitated. "*Chere petite maman*," said I; "she is fondly taking her last leave of her in private;" and for fear of intruding upon their notice, I walked away.

I took several turns, but still they had not descended; and though I knew not why, in so very simple and very usual a matter as a *tete a tete* between two friends, I wondered that this conference should last so long. It seemed as if it never would have an end.

It was not till I was returning to the house, full half-an-hour after I had left it, that I beheld Bertha through the doorway, crossing the hall to her father's room, and Lady Hungerford presently advancing down the steps as if to meet me. She seemed full of meaning, both in her countenance and action, and said rather gaily,

"As I have lost my knight, I must put up with my squire, as a lady of my consequence cannot take the air unattended, and I want air."

I told her, with as much sincerity as gallantry, that there was no service that could be imposed upon me so agreeable, and that I rejoiced that Granville was so occupied that I might for a moment be lord in waiting in his room.

"O!" said she, "never mind him till to-morrow; the remainder of this day I give to you, as I already have the beginning of it. I have much to tell you, and I think we must adjourn to the summer-house, which has always been to you so eventful."

I was up in arms in an instant, for I saw there was something important on her mind, which, after this long conference with her friend, I thought portended something of no mean consequence; and I would have hurried her to the spot she had appointed, but for my respect, and that she protested she would take her own time and her own way in every thing she had to say. I saw there was nothing left for it but to obey, and allowed her, teasingly, as I thought, for it was very slowly, to lead the way to the ominous place.

"The arms of Saxony!" said she, as, on entering, she looked at the pediment over the door; "and the prince of Saxony!" as she looked at the print over the chimney-piece. "Well, luckily for you, and unluckily for him, that it is all done away with. But, let me see, I perceive not Mansell here, nor Melford; she should have had them, if only to keep them in remembrance, or look at them as trophies."

"Dear, dear Madam," cried I, "what is all this? Have you led me here to sport with me, after laying me on the rack? It is not like you. For heaven's sake, relieve me—let me not die in ignorance."

"I allow," said she, more seriously and most kindly, "you have some reason to complain; but, believe me, I am not sporting with you; I am only not quite certain how to begin,

for I am almost astounded myself with wonder. Season, however, your admiration for a while ; let me recollect myself, and I will endeavour methodically to tell you, that I think I see sunshine through the cloud ; though in the first instance I have to throw myself on your mercy, for I have betrayed you."

"And is that all?" cried I, much disappointed. "Those foolish verses of Sir Charles were not worth being kept a secret. Granville has just unravelled that mystery. Be assured, dear lady, you are completely pardoned, if such a word can be applied from me to you, and more especially for such a thing."

"Has Mr. Granville then told you no more? Has he related nothing that passed between him and his uncle yesterday?"

"Not a syllable."

"I find, then," continued Lady Hungerford, "I have more to do than I thought ; though, if you know Mr. Hastings, you must have seen that you are no common person in his estimation."

"To his civilities, nay, I trust I may add, his friendship," returned I, "I must ever be alive ; but I have observed no more."

"See what it is to be modest," replied the lady. "I tell you that his estimation of you is not a common one ; nay, *for him*, it is a most uncommon one. He leaned much to you for your conduct to his son, and from feeling the injustice of that son's conduct to you. You won his heart afterwards by your attentions to him on occasion of the terrible catastrophe of poor Foljambe's death ; and though your unfortunate delirium made separation necessary, still he regretted your loss as a companion, and followed your progress in the world with interest. But the vivid attachment you shewed for his honour, and that of his darling, heightened a hundred-fold, he said, from the cold treatment you had met with from them, and supported by such gallantry, under such danger, wound up the whole, and he affirmed to Mr. Granville (an amazing admission for *him*), that he loved you as a son."

I was delighted, as may be supposed, to hear all this ; but, not in the least knowing what it tended to.

"My dearest Madam," said I, "for pity's sake, tell me to what, if any thing, this intimation can lead. Flattering and pleasing as it must be to be so thought of by any one, but particularly by Mr. Hastings, that it will advance me one inch to the fondest object of my life, I do not see."

"Then, you are less clear-sighted than I thought," answered the lady; "for do you not see from Bertha's whole character, that before she could permit her heart to have the semblance of a feeling such as you covet, she must be fortified by the certainty that it would be approved by the parent she adores?"

"Yes, dear lady," said I; "no one can see the father and daughter together, but must be convinced of that. Her devotion of herself to the maintenance of his honour with the prince would alone prove it, even if I had not witnessed it in all those beautiful sentiments of filial piety which our little readings have recently elicited. But of what avail is it to me that her father thinks well of me; nay, even (if that could be known) that he would not reject me as a son-in-law, unless I had made far more way than I feel I have, where almost alone it is of consequence? Witness the strangeness of her altered tone and distant manner upon a mere and most uncertain hint of my feelings towards her, so recently as last night."

Lady Hungerford here seemed a little conscious of something she knew not how to explain, and paused long before she replied. She seemed to be seeking for the proper answer, looked round the room, and adjusted parts of her dress. At length, with a heightened colour, and some hesitation, she said,

"I was ever a bad one at what may be called management. I am unable to dissemble if I would, and own myself a little entangled. Fear of compromising both your friend Granville and myself, perhaps I may also say Mr. Hastings and his daughter, induced me to attempt what is generally dangerous, and never honest, a half confidence. The straightest way, therefore, is to make up for it by an unreserved frankness, and to confess that, urged by our entire and warmest wishes for your success, we could not leave either you or this dear family (especially on the eve of our departure from all of you for some years), plunged, as you seem to be, in endless un-

certainties upon the tenderest, as well as the most important question that can be agitated, and not make an effort to extricate you. You have yourself often said that absolute rejection was better than suspense; yet, whether from modesty or hopelessness, you have taken no measures to put an end to suspense; nor could I myself know how to counsel you till within these four-and-twenty hours, when, from what fell in Mr. Granville's conference with his uncle, and mine with my dearest Bertha, I resolved not to risk a failure of your consent by consulting you, but to disclose all I knew at once. In a word, my betrayal of you has gone much farther than the mere gallantry of the verses to Chloris. Reproach me, if you please, but forgive me if you can, for I have disclosed your whole secret, and Bertha knows how much, how long, and with what constancy you have loved her."

It is not easy to say how I received this startling intelligence. The crisis of my fate was thus brought home, in a manner indeed most kindly meant by the person in the world whom I most considered and admired, and who only honoured me by the interest she took in me; but not the less was it a crisis, fraught with happiness or misery. I felt all its importance, and all its danger—that I was walking on ground mined underneath, and that a few minutes, nay, another word from Lady Hungerford, might overthrow my whole scheme and hope of happiness, and send me for ever into distant banishment.

My anxiety may be imagined, nay, was depicted in my face to such a degree, that Lady Hungerford was alarmed, and was forced, she said, to smile more perhaps than was warrantable, in order to keep me at peace with myself, to say nothing of her.

"Come," said she, "I see I have summoned up all the constitutional agonies that make such a havoc with your heart whenever it is affected. Do you know you will never make a great man, and least of all, a great statesman, whose first quality is either to be without feeling, or to disguise if he have it, so as it can never be discovered. You might at least have waited till your death-warrant was signed before you became so terrified. This is not yet the fact; and though I cannot tell, with any certainty, what *is*, I can tell you that Bertha has long thought of and valued you as a brother, which, for *the present*, ought to content you."

"Ah!" said I, "how much may or may not be in that 'at present?' and how tame——"

"For a lover," interrupted Lady Hungerford, "to be asked only as a brother. Are you, then, one of those ardent spirits which value only that sort of love that takes and hews fire like touch-wood, and of course burns out soon? I should rather have thought that the pupil of Mr. Fothergill and Mr. Manners would have preferred (as, be assured, experience will prove to you that you ought to prefer) the affection which is the gentle and quiet growth of deep-seated esteem. Such, I may say, is what at this moment actuates me to take the awful step which is about to decide the cast of my life; and such, I will venture to predict, if you do not brow beat it away, may in time produce all you wish in her of whom you have so long thought, and so long despaired. But, I cry you mercy!" continued she in an altered tone, seeing that I was not so overjoyed as she expected. "You think, perhaps, that this sort of love, even if it exists (which I know not that it yet does), is of too cold and slow a growth. You gentlemen enthusiasts would only value a mistress who would, on a moment's warning, be ready at a window with a ladder of ropes. This is not Bertha's character, who, however I could please, and exult, perhaps sport with you, by telling you how she received the intelligence I gave her of your attachment——"

"Ah! Madam!" said I, "if you would make me your slave for the rest of my life, stop not here; but tell me."

"Very good," said she; "but as you are to be Bertha's slave, not mine, this will be no inducement. At any rate, it would disappoint you; for it was not half vehement enough. There were no tears; no hysterics; not even a tremor—a few blushes indeed."

"O!" cried I seeing her stop again; "keep your word—do not sport with me, but go on."

"It is because I will not sport with you, that I am thus plain in my recital. Miss Hastings, with all her vivacity, all her softness of feeling, is, as I told you, no enthusiast. It is quite sufficient for you that she seemed any thing but sorry for the news I gave her, and allowed you were the man in the world whom from childhood she had most esteemed."

"Delightful! Amiable Bertha!" cried I, and was going on, when Lady Hungerford interrupted me.



"Be not too elate," she added ; "for, notwithstanding this, she would not allow her feelings to exceed their present tranquil state."

"Tranquil state ! Are they then so tranquil ?"

"They are, and ought to be ; and if your own were so too, and you had given me time to finish, I would have added—until the whole matter was laid before her father ; and if he did not oppose, she would then——"

"Ah !—what ?"

"Consider."

"O heavens !—consider ! What, no more ?—not, even—with her father's consent, more than consider ?"

"And enough, too. Surely you could not expect her even to consider whether she should accept an offer or not, before she knew her father's opinion ?"

"True ! true ! I had forgot that."

"Well, then, I think I have, upon the whole, done you eminent service, and you will not only forgive, but feel obliged to me. Be assured I have, since last night, brought you a mile nearer to your object than you would have brought yourself in the next twelve months ; and you may thank my own situation—about to leave you and Bertha for a long and indefinite time (you irresolute ; Bertha ignorant ; both of you without a common friend)—for prompting me to so critical a proceeding."

It may be supposed how gratefully I expressed myself for this kindness, as well as how full of admiration I was at such energy. Certainly, this exquisite woman was, in both, the wonder of her sex.

"Now one thing more," added she, "before we break up this conference. There must be no disguises, no acting of parts, between you hereafter. She indeed is above it, and you too, but for what I cannot altogether blame, a sense of old inferiority, which, though only worldly, does not any longer even exist. You no know each other's position. She—that you love, and seek permission to woo her ; you—that she at least esteems you more than other men. I will not conceal from you that, if her father is favorable, I look for this esteem as likely to ripen into something much warmer, nay, as warm as you can wish ; but you must have patience, for the contrary may ruin you."

How did my heart leap at this ! But could I help asking if she had any *particular* reason for it ?

“ None, be assured,” said she, “ except from common observation ; so do not (odd compound as you are of sanguineness and fear—of confidence and despair) imagine that any thing specific has passed between us. My surmise is the result of mere ordinary penetration ; for no unsophisticated young woman would have given that consequence which her changed behavior to you intimated last evening, upon the incident of the verses, unless something more than common played round her heart. But we loiter here, when we have but a few hours left, which ought to be given to action. By we, I mean Mr. Granville as well as myself ; I believe he is at this moment with his uncle, watching opportunity ; for I own the only thing wanting to my own happiness is to leave that of two persons whom I so much regard, in a way to be realized. So, for a time, farewell. No thanks, for I cannot stay to relieve them.”

At this she flew off, leaving me in Bertha’s hermitage, which appeared now, more than ever, the temple of purity and love. Here my heart and mind felt in a wilderness of thought and feeling, from which I did not, for a very long time, awaken.

When I did, I staggered towards the house, when I met Granville, who was coming in quest of me. He instantly seized my arm, and hurrying me into that walk in which, remarkably, near three years before, he had so emphatically urged the necessity for my renouncing all my feelings for Bertha, he there congratulated me on the prospect which he said he thought had now opened in my favor.

“ Both Honora and I,” said he, “ have been at work for you. I know what has passed between you, and that she acquainted you with the critical importance which might result from the interview I have just had with my uncle. Not to torture you, therefore, with suspense, I think I may say it has been decidedly favorable, and at once give you joy.”

At these words the dear fellow flew into my arms, as I did into his, and to relieve my impatience he proceeded at once in his story.

“ Honora,” said he, “ informed you that I had gone to Mr. Hastings’ apartment to watch an opportunity. I did not do

so long, for he almost immediately made one. 'Sit near me, nephew,' said he, 'and talk to me of your approaching happiness. You have ever been a son to me, and more than a son.' At this he sighed deeply, and added, 'how extraordinary—perhaps, I may say, how cruel—my fate, that I should meet with more care and consolation from you, more distant from me in blood, and even from another with whom I have no connection at all, than from him who is gone, though my own flesh and blood !'

"By another, you mean Mr. Clifford, dear Sir," said I, "and I believe you judge rightly of his attachment to you. 'Tis a little hard," observed he, "that he, too, must leave me as well as you, and at the same time as you and dear Lady Hungerford. As for me, I shall never see any of you again, and we may as well part now, in a less mournful manner, as six months hence. But what poor Bertha is to do without her friend, the only one she has loved, or allowed herself to love, in the world, is a bitter thought to me. I now perceive how wrong, how selfish—how very selfish I have been, in agreeing to allow her (for it was her own determination, against my better judgment) to immure herself here, in watching the decline of a useless old man. She has not the place that belongs to her in the world, and has laid no ground for it after I am gone. Yet your dear Honora, who was the sister of her infancy, and the friend of her youth, as it ripened, will, I know, not abandon her ; but you will be abroad when I am called.'

"Here the old man let fall some anxious tears, which much affected me. I endeavoured to console him, but without much success. 'I have considered the matter,' said he, 'in all its points. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and my child will, I dare say, not want for friends ; and, though our rays are diminished, she is still an heiress, and will not want for fortune ; but, on account of that very fortune, she may the more want protection ; and, above all, her heart will want a partner, for it is a social heart.'

"Here again my good uncle was a little overcome. 'Hitherto,' continued he, 'I have, strange to say, appeared to fill that heart ; at least the only one to share it with me was she who has given hers to you. No one who has addressed her ever succeeded in impressing it ; and here, again, I

am bowed with self-blame for having harressed her with that long engagement, which has only just left her free. It is not that any of those who courted her could have made her happy, except, perhaps, poor, lost Melford, had he turned out differently; but the engagement was a bar to all, and she voluntarily lived the life of a nun. All this makes me feel our approaching separation the more, and will embitter my final departure ten-fold. To-morrow—to you a day of rejoicing—will to us be one of mourning; and not the less, because the day after will take from us one whom, from the generous attachment he has shewn to our honour, and the interest which he in every thing seems to take in us, we appreciate as he deserves. I shall greatly miss him myself; but when Bertha has lost her *chaperon* and you, I see not how, with propriety, I can ask so young a person to prolong his visit, where she will, of necessity, be almost his only companion.'

"I was meditating what answer to make to this (which indeed was not easy), when to my surprise, and pleasure too, he went on, as if it had suddenly struck him, 'Ay; if he, or such a one as he, had been among those who addressed her during the engagement with her cousin, what a relief would it have been, now it is over, to all those fears and anxieties I have been expressing to you.'

"I felt, as I have said, surprised, nay, astonished at this. What I had been with so much eagerness and care endeavouring to bring about, exhausting all my forethought and ingenuity to provide against the difficulties that seemed to surround it, appeared here almost settled to my hand, and only to require a word of explanation to complete it. But, my good friend," added Granville, seeing me here much agitated, "if you cannot bear this communication better, we must stop, or adjourn to yonder bench, or you will certainly be down. You are pale and red, by turns, and seem to have lost your breath—if you are going to lose your senses too, pray give me notice, for it will spare me the rest of my tale."

"O! Granville," said I, "spare raillery; this is not a matter for wit—for heaven's love, go on."

"Can you bear it?" asked he, and made as if he would feel my pulse. "Come, pretty calm again. Well, then, to proceed:—I almost doubted whether I had understood Mr.

Hastings to mean seriously what his words implied ; and to ascertain it, I actually observed (forgive me for it)—‘ With all my esteem and love for Mr. Clifford, I never could have supposed this, knowing that, though he is a gentleman both in birth and education, his family have been so reduced as to be in a very moderate condition.’

“ I care not for their condition,” replied he, with some quickness ; ‘ they are all of them Normans ; he is himself now owner of the identical castle of his ancestors, the ancient barons ; and my creed, you know is, that the blood of a gentleman can never be washed out. But, far beyond this, he has given proofs of his nobleness of his nature, as well as of his family, in his generous devotion of himself towards us, spite, not only of appalling danger, but of affronting and ungrateful slights on our parts. In this too he seemed the instrument of the vengeance of heaven upon the murderer of my poor boy. But why waste words upon this part of the subject ? The question will never arise. I see no signs of it on either side. The wanderings of a youth in a delirium from a fever were nothing, and ought not to have been noticed. What I admire in him is, his gratuitous attention to us since, and the gallant hazard he ran in defence of our good name, without any other possible motive than a generous desire to vindicate our honour. No, no. It will be time enough to talk of objections, when something more appears than the mere friendliness of childhood, which is renewed between him and Bertha.’

“ ‘ Uncle,’ said I, ‘ will you let me express an opinion upon this ?’

“ Willingly, my dear nephew,” replied he.

“ ‘ Then forgive me, if I think differently from you, and with good ground, in regard to his feelings towards Bertha. Shall I even confess to you that I know that for years, nay, from the first moment he saw her, his heart has been entirely hers, with a devotion almost without example ; that he did all he could to overcome it, from his sense of its hopelessness on account of his inferiority ; but that it haunted him day and night, sleeping and waking, and he nursed it in secret till it became part of himself ; and though he breathed not a syllable of it to my cousin, nor to me, till I detected it myself, he cherished it in humble distance, resolving, he said, that it

should descend with him to the grave, without it's ever being known to her, or to you ?

“ ‘ Quite like himself, and most like a gentleman,’ said my uncle, though with a look of astonishment. ‘ But go on. With such a resolution, why did he trust himself here ?’

“ ‘ His worldly situation is much changed,’ answered I.

“ ‘ Ha !’ exclaimed Mr. Hastings ; ‘ what am I to understand by that ? Has he addressed Bertha ?’ “ He said this with agitation—— ‘ No !’ replied I, quickly, ‘ or you would have in the instant known it from her, as soon as she knew it herself, but from him before ; for, much as he loved her, he never would have even told his love without your previous approbation.’

“ ‘ That alters the case,’ observed Mr. Hastings, still in a sort of confusion from surprise ; ‘ but how is it then that neither of us have known any thing of it ?’

“ ‘ From the same modesty,’ answered I, ‘ which he felt in humbler circumstances, and which has not yet abandoned him. I know that up to yesterday he was in misery, from doubt of the event ; and even talked of accompanying me to Germany, in despair both of her affection and your consent.’

“ ‘ If he can gain her affection,’ replied my uncle, after a little thought, ‘ I know not why he should despair of my consent.’

“ He said this with an air of dignified decision, as if he had measured all your pretensions with his own, and, only after the consideration due to his own, had decided in your favour. I must, however, do the dear old man the justice to say that he added, ‘ ’Tis true, Bertha is no longer the rich heiress she was, such being the will of Providence, “ the wind and storm fulfilling his word.”\* But as, if she were poorer than she will be, I am sure this would make no difference in him ; so, were she richer than she is, it would make none in me.’

“ I sincerely complimented him upon this honorable sentiment.”

“ And what must I do ? my dear Granville,” cried I, no longer able to keep silence. “ How admire or thank him enough ? O ! that some favorable aspect may appear in the other horizon, which I begin almost verily to believe may be, under

\* Evidently alluding to the hurricane.

the auspices of that incomparable woman, who, like yourself, seems born to be my tutelary deity. How can I ever thank you, my true friend, for all you have told me?"

"Still there is much to do," observed Granville.

"Which it makes my heart tremble to think of," said I. "Pray did Mr. Hastings suggest nothing in regard to my proceedings?"

"Nothing; except that he was so pleased with your honorable intentions, of first apprizing him of your views before you addressed his daughter, that he gives you *carte blanche* to act as you please, determining, in the mean time, in order to leave you a fair field, as he thinks would be most agreeable to you, not to interpose with either persuasion or advice. Can you wish for more?"

"O, no! If to be a messenger of good tidings is to be one, you are an absolute evangelist. Again, how shall I thank you?"

"By letting me see you as happy as myself."

"God send it!"

## CHAPTER XXX.

### OF THE NOBLE CANDOR DISPLAYED BY BERTHA.—FRIENDSHIP AND GOOD OFFICES OF LADY HUNGERFORD.

If it were now to die,

'T were now to be most happy; for I fear

My soul hath her content so absolute,

That not another comfort like to this

Succeeds in unknown fate.—SHAKESPEARE.—*Othello*.

THE information from Granville with which I concluded the last chapter made, as may be supposed, a considerable change for the better in all my prospects. Furnished with such armor of proof as the favorable disposition of Mr. Hastings, I gave way with more confidence to the delight inspired by Lady Hungerford's assurances.

Yet I felt bewildered, and knew not exactly how to proceed. At first I was for instantly seeking a personal interview with Bertha; then, thinking that too confident, for sending to ask permission for an audience in form; then, to address her through Lady Hungerford, whom I would entreat to be my mediatrix; then through her father himself. But I could determine finally upon none of these plans, and suffered not a little raillery from Lady Hungerford, who, however consoled me by saying she liked me the better for it.

"I would not care half so much," said she, "for the success of your object, if I saw you setting methodically about it, as a matter of business, or even with the dignity and self-possession of an experienced great man of the world. Your tremors and indecision are quite taking, and I would not help you, if I could, to get rid of them; except, indeed, that, as I am to leave you all to-morrow, it would be more pleasant to leave you comfortable. Indeed, anxiety about my dearest Bertha is the only alloy I feel to my own happiness.

Then seeing that I was still in a confusion of plans, the kind lady said—

"Well, I perceive you scholars and fine-minded people are but children after all, where a love affair is concerned. Why, a French marquis, or even an English militia captain, would beat you all to nothing were the case theirs; and I think I must continue to be the patroness you used to do me the honor to call me, and so far smoothe the way, as to communicate to your queen, what she ought in the first instance to know—the result of Mr. Granville's conference with his uncle this morning."

This greatly relieved me, and my face I suppose showed it, for she said—

"There, now the sun shines again! I have but an hour more of the morning for my own affairs, but I will give half of it to yours."

So saying, she left me, but before she tript quite away, advised me not by any means to part with my anxious look, but go and walk under Bertha's window, with my arms folded across, my hat slouched over my eyes; "and be sure," said she, "to sigh like furnace." Her cheerful tone did me all the good possible, and I thanked my stars for having given me such a friend.

Her half hour, however, lengthened into a whole one, and indeed seemed so unbearably long, that I was tempted to obey her last piece of advice to the letter, and found myself actually under the window pointed out, almost in the very predicament recommended; only it would have been in vain, for there was no one above to behold it.

In time she came back, with a busy seriousness, though not a sorrowful one, in her eye, and taking me with her along the terrace, said kindly and encouragingly—



"I have been long, for such explanations cannot be made in the twinkling of an eye, and a young lady cannot be expected to yield herself up to a young gentleman on a summons being sent her by a neutral power. Not however to frighten you, for I see you are already alarmed, I come to conduct you to Bertha, and to tell you that she is too good a daughter not to obey her father:—No raptures, but let quiet be the order of the day, for she is overcome with surprise, and in no mood to encounter a storm.

"My dear, dear Madam—"cried I.

"I tell you be quiet," said she, "and even silent, if possible, with Bertha herself, to whom I have promised to bring you."

"Oh! tell me but where, that I may fly——"

"No! flying won't do, neither. You must proceed soberly with me to the garden door of her father's room, where she is, and which is luckily vacant just now for half an hour, he being driving out with Mr. Granville, with whom he has business; and when there, I shall leave you. Nay, if you tremble so, I will not answer for your success."

I could augur nothing ill from such pleasantry, so accompanied the dear lady round to the other side of the house, and, through the glass door, into the well-known room, where I found the long-loved object of my vows. Certainly, as her friend had told me, she seemed in no condition to encounter a storm; for she appeared faint, agitated, and deeply pensive; and when we entered, moved not her head from the hand which supported it, her elbow leaning on the end of the sofa where she was sitting.

Though her cheek was flushed, and her eyes averted, she had stretched out the other hand on one of the cushions, and Lady Hungerford perceiving it, placed it gently in mine, and saying she thought she could not do better than leave us by ourselves, fairly quitted the room.

Oh, what a moment! after all I had gone through! and what wonder if I scarcely possessed my mind any more than Bertha herself, whose eyes continued to be covered by the hand on which she leaned, though the other gladdened my very soul by returning the pressure of mine. Nay, when dropping on one knee, I pressed it to my lips, though there was a sort of struggle (a very gentle one) to withdraw it, she

did not altogether take it from me, but allowed it still to remain.

At last, finding my tongue, which till now had denied its office, I exclaimed,

"Oh, God of heaven! is it possible that I can be thus repaid at last, after years of devotion, torture, and despair? Is it possible that Lady Hungerford's intelligence can be true, and that I am not in a dream? If I am, let me never awake, nor again encounter the misery and hopelessness of reality."

Bertha's only answer, at first, was by a more sensible pressure by her hand; but in a few moments I heard, in a still, soft whisper, the words,

"No, Mr. De Clifford, as I must believe all I have been told of my father's approbation, it is no dream; but (and her voice here became softer and softer), as Lady Hungerford has no doubt told you, you must not take me away from *him*."

Then turning her glowing cheek (glowing with the purest blush of modesty that ever love knew), and seeing me still on my knee, she said with quickness,

"Oh! why is this? Surely this does not become Mr. De Clifford to descend to, nor me to suffer. This must never—never be. Oh! rise—rise, I entreat you."

I obeyed; and taking my seat by her side, we felt, by degrees, somewhat more at ease. To detail, however, all that passed in this delicious moment of unlooked-for happiness—of unreserved and authorized confidence—is not only not necessary, but would be impossible if it were. Suffice it, that my feelings were gratified to their utmost power of bearing, by the dear and melting tidings which, by degrees, she allowed me to elicit from her; for I learned, with what feelings may be imagined, that she had perceived my love for her even in her girlhood, from the earliest moments of its existence; had felt it with an interest only enhanced by seeing it cherished so long in silence and distance, under fears and hopelessness, such as had always prevented its open profession; that its constancy under so many trials, but, in particular, under that great one of supposed unkindness, had touched her heart with a sort of remorse, which a sense of her engagement could alone dispel; but that when the engagement was at an end, the warmth I had shewn in her defence when attacked, and the appalling danger I had encountered

in asserting her cause, had weakened her self-control, so that when she saw me once more under the paternal roof, possessing so much of her father's regard, and my cause espoused by the friends she most loved in the world, she acknowledged that all I wished was reciprocal. Finally, to my ineffable delight, she wound up these confessions (though I only gained them from her after many intervals of pause and hesitation, which increased their interest a hundred-fold) with a frank avowal, in the very words of Portia—which had never been absent from her memory since she heard them—that she willingly committed her gentle spirit to mine, to be directed,

“As from her lord, her governor, and king.”

Let those who, like me, have loved to desperation, imagine, if they can, the effect of this thrilling confession on the ears that heard, and the heart that felt it. Language in vain attempts to describe it, and sinks in the endeavour. All that can be said is, that the sweet character of this delightful creature was arrayed in its own peculiar lustre, and that openness, softness, delicacy, and affection (now not only not opposed, but encouraged to develop themselves), shone out in all their purity, and all their attraction.

Their effect upon my faculties, which had so long been oppressed with doubt and uncertainty—the sport of every whisper, and almost every look,—was miraculous. My powers were suddenly strengthened, as by a potent spell or vivifying cordial, and I felt that not that nepenthe, given in Egypt by the wife of Thone to Jove-born Helena,

“Was of such power to stir up joy as this.”

I will not say that this was the happiest moment of my life, because tumultuous happiness yields in real joy to that which is more, sedate, and, thanks to heaven and this inestimable person, I have had many moments with her since, more tranquil, yet far more precious in their effect upon the heart. But never had her beauty, set off with the maiden blush of modesty, appeared to my charmed eyes half so engaging. Had I, therefore, been conqueror of the world, I could not have felt more elate; and at a loss to thank her spite of her prohibition, I threw myself again at her feet,

and invoked the blessing of heaven upon her dear head, for the goodness and noble frankness she had shewn.

How long we might have remained in this delirium (for it was little less) I don't know, but it was put an end to by the return of Lady Hungerford, who, seeing how things were, fondly kissed her young friend, and shaking hands with me, congratulated herself upon having produced such a happy state of things, the consummation of which, by being ratified by Mr. Hastings, was all, she said, that was now wanting.

This, we hoped, was now at hand, by the return of the carriage in which Granville had driven his uncle for an airing. Bertha was confused, and trembled at the approach of her father; and Lady Hungerford proposed her retiring to her chamber to regain a little calm, in which she acquiesced: and as Mr. Hastings generally reposed for half an hour by himself after returning from his drive, we all retreated from his apartment to leave it free.

Meantime this best of friends, with her usual presence of mind, planned with Granville the mode of communicating what had passed to Mr. Hastings, on his awakening from his usual noontide doze.

With what restlessness did I not watch the progress of it—how I wished old people were not invalids; or if they were, and were forced to sleep in the daytime, that they would not sleep so long.

It was just an hour after Mr. Hastings took to his couch before he awoke from his refreshing slumber, and called for his daughter, instead of whom Granville presented himself. Meantime I had not known how to beguile the interval. Lady Hungerford was once more shut up with her dear pupil, and Granville was most provokingly absorbed in marriage papers, which had to be inspected and signed before the next morning. I was therefore left entirely to myself, to indulge my hopes in soliloquy, or whisper my fears to the oaks and beeches of the park.

But, thanks to my happy fortunes, there was no occasion for fear. Mr. Hastings' waking was one of the *mollia tempora fandi*, which Granville, with his usual kindness and usual promptitude, seized, and, as he frankly said, with little, or rather no difficulty, profited by it so effectually, that an hour afterwards beheld both Bertha and myself on our knees, kis-

sing the hands of her father, and asking and receiving his blessing, and as free and full consent to our union as my own or Bertha's dutiful heart could wish.

And here, having brought the more changeful parts of my life, though yet in its early days, to a termination, I might close these memoirs. For though eventful to me, and amply confirming all the maxims regarding human life which I had imbibed from my sage and practised preceptors, Fothergill, Manners, and Lord Castleton, few incidents remain which might particularly interest the reader. I cannot, however, conclude without noticing the consummation of the happiness of my two admirable friends, to whom I owe the chief blessing of my life, in her who gilded its dawn, its meridian, and its sunset.

I wish also to add to these notices, one which, for the sake of the moral it affords, if not for the intrinsic interest, it contains, may be deemed not an unimportant feature in perhaps the most important of all sciences, the science of Human Nature.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE VAIN EFFORTS TO RECOVER FROM THE EFFECTS OF VICE WHEN MADE TOO LATE.—AFFECTING CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF SIR HARRY MELFORD.

Try what repentance can. What can it not?

Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?

SHAKESPEARE.—*Hamlet*.

THE allusion made at the end of the last chapter was to Sir Harry Melford, a man who, whether from his original disposition to value the decencies, if not the virtues of life, or the accomplishments of his mind and manners, was certainly made for better fortune than befel him.

Our last mention of him was at a dinner at Granville's, in town, where he shewed a humour and perversion of principle, which made it little likely that he should so soon, or at all, exhibit such feelings as the letter I am about to transcribe evinces. It was received by Granville only the day before his nuptials, and was written to him in consequence of the expectation of them, which was spread all over Yorkshire.

I had observed the arrival of the packet, and that it instantly occasioned a seriousness both in Granville and Lady Hungerford. They were closeted upon it for near an hour, and afterwards, to my great wonder, with Bertha. For, happy as

I was, I was still sensitive, and dreaded some announcement respecting the prince, or perhaps a new suitor. The conference, too, lasted long, nor was I relieved by seeing that the two ladies were considerably affected. I was, however, restored by being allowed to read the packet, which was as follows :—

*Melford Hall, 10th August, 17.—*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I have heard with unfeigned pleasure, but I must add, not without envy, the accounts of your approaching nuptials with perhaps the most admired lady in Europe. I felt the pleasure on your account—the envy on my own. Alas! Granville, when we set out in life, which we did almost together, who would have thought (and what but my own accursed folly could have effected it), that in ten years time, before youth had quite departed, our lots should be so differently cast? When we started, I had the advantage at least in point of fortune, and was equal to you in connection, perhaps I might say in personal, though certainly not in mental accomplishments.

“Where are we now? You, covered with honours, the fruit of merit and character, and crowned with all the felicity which pure and virtuous love can produce; I—but I fear to enter upon the terrible subject, though I have so long planned it, longed for it, and only waited for the occasion of your marriage, to execute my design. It would be a relief, I thought, to my half-broken heart, to open it to you; yet now the time is come, I shrink from it with a fear and irresolution of which I am ashamed. But, whatever it cost, I will proceed.

“That evil genius of mine, Hortense—the scene you found me in with her at Wetherby, near two years ago, has scarce ever been out of my mind since. Oh! how different from that to which you were sent to invite me; and what a contrast that wretched woman, to the angel who would have been ready to have received me, had my sense of my own unworthiness allowed me to accept the invitation. No; so far I had grace, that I could not—dared not insult the pure presence of that lovely being, by rushing into it, reeking from one who was her total opposite. Nor, though another wretch has since been born to reproach me, and prove the shame of both

parents, has it in the least altered my disgust both at myself and its mother.

"Although, therefore, when I dined with you some time ago, wine, and fear, and shame, made me play the bully, in affronting all that good taste, as much as good morals, holds sacred, I too deeply felt, and have since too keenly remembered, the affecting contrast which Brownlow (another happy man) drew between a wife and a mistress, and how severely to myself he proved that Hortense was nothing but a ——: no; I cannot write the word.\*

"Alas! my misfortune is, that to that mother of my children, from I know not what cause, I feel in such cowardly subservience, that I in vain plan an endeavour to get free. Oh! that you, or Brownlow, or both conjoined, could help me, and redeem me from a curse more heavy than Cain's, of being exiled from all that I once prized, and still would recover, if I could—the conversation and esteem of virtuous society. Say what we will, and however education, from our earliest years, may corrupt us, or example palliate the mischief, the loss of this, till we are absolutely cankered and rotten in mind, can never but be lamented with unberable agony, and as I am not yet so cankered, I own to you all my misery.

"Wonder not at my talking of corruption from our earliest years; for what education does not promote, instead of resisting it? What school-boy, but above all, what collegian, is not taught by his own passions, and the force of example in all around him, to make light of that virtue which interferes with his pleasures, whether of women, wine, or gaming—or if it only restrain one particle of his liberty, though for the sake of wholesome discipline?† Who, however young, does not place his point of honour in being a man, in vice, before his time? To be libertine, extravagant, sensual, immodest, beyond others, is to be manly, bold, prosperous, and the envy of his fellows.

"Is there any thing in his studies, or what his tutors daily exact from him, to repress this? Is there a single moral or religious precept taught him, or a single moral or religious book put into his hands, after he has left the nursery? No. All the licentious contrary. The vehicles of his learning are

\* See the conversation at Granville's dinner, Vol. II.

† See Foljambe Hastings' case, Vol. I. ch. 14.

all of them panders to vice, by rendering his imagination prurient under the pretence of polishing it.

“ He cannot be a scholar without Latin and Greek ; and he cannot have Latin and Greek except through the medium of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Homer, and Anacron. I do not deny the importance of these as masters of song ; but their effect upon the mind, from the tales of debauchery which they contain, both of gods and men, I need not point out to you.

“ What wonder, then, if every school is a hot-bed of self-indulgence, and, in respect to chastity, the destruction of all principle ? Hence our later years demand all our energies in the correction (and happy he who is not too far gone to succeed) of the canker and infection contracted in our younger.

“ That I, having fallen, have not been able to recover myself as others have, can never be sufficiently deplored ; but it is this education, supposed so liberal and so polished, that has ruined me.

“ One chance I had for the reformation I sought, in attaching myself to an angel of light : I failed, and fell back upon an angel of darkness. When I was where you are now, I thought myself in Eden ; but have long felt for ever expelled from that happy place, guarded as it is against me by the flaming sword which protects it from every thing impure.

“ Oh ! miserable, wretched mistake !—ineffable cowardice !—weak and illiberal, as ruinous pique ! which made me think the loss of Heaven could be compensated by an alliance with hell ! It is not that Hortense is grossly wicked, or abandoned in every thing. She is even a good mother to her children, though indifferent to their father ; especially since I have refused the great, and I believe, only object she had in view when she gave herself to me—marriage. To gratify her in this would both stultify and disgrace myself ; yet to continue in this state is more disgraceful, and renders my return to society impossible, if I ever could return to it with the credit, without which perpetual banishment would be preferable. Miserable, deplorable, irremediable alternative !

“ I have offered her largely to induce her to quit me ; but she goes into fits (sometimes of dudgeon, and sometimes, what is worse, of tenderness) at the thought. Were it only a question of terms, I would arrange it, though it cost half my fortune ; but unless she met some one as weak and as



rich as myself to engage her, it is easy to see she would perpetually persecute me.

"Then, again, the children! If I leave them to her, I consign them to infamy, probably to ruin; especially the girl. If I retain them myself, what are they but living reproaches and monuments of folly, to call it nothing else?

"O Granville! could your blessed cousin witness my remorse, my misery, my sense of shame, she would pity and forgive me. I say forgive; for it is against *her* I have sinned. What was it but sin to think I could console myself for her rejection in the arms of a——but I again check myself. How dearly I have paid for the mistake, and how deeply every word that Brownlow spoke upon the subject has told upon my heart, this letter will demonstrate.

"Comfort, counsel me, dear Granville. I dare not ask to be presented to your matchless lady, still less to be endured again at Foljambe Park; for they are all like the *Jasmins of Jesse*, so feelingly quoted by Brownlow; they all seem to tell me, 'We are spotless, we are pure;' while I must either hide myself from the world, or course through it with a mark set upon me to be shunned.

"Yet am I but thirty years old, and thus thrown away upon a dunghill, instead of being, like you, blessed with reputation, and thrice blessed in the love of that superior person, to whom, if I dared, I would beg you to offer my respects.

"H. M."

This affecting letter, as Granville told me, drew tears from the eyes of the person last mentioned in it, as indeed it did from his own. Lady Hungerford, while she lamented the wreck, as she called it, of such a mind, desired instantly to plan something towards its recovery, and for that purpose decided that the first step should be to separate him from the dangerous Hortense; next, to promise every facility to his return to his place in society, by herself giving him her countenance, and receiving his visits as formerly. Nay, she even went so far as to plan his reception once more, if he chose it, at Foljambe, and, for this purpose, proposed communicating the letter to Bertha.

"Poor girl!" said she; "she will see herself, in some measure, a party concerned; and having, though most unin-

tentionally, through his despair, driven him from the paths of virtue, she ought, and will, I have no doubt, do what she can to smooth his return to it."

Granville, after some hesitation, from a fear of exposing his friend, withdrew his objection to the measure so far, that the purport of the letter, though not actually the letter itself, should be laid before Bertha and Mr. Hastings, who both gave Lady Hungerford all the assurances she anticipated, of their desire to second her benevolent object. But the letter itself, and the discussion which it prompted, excited much feeling, and many reminiscences, and hence the effect which, as I have related, so surprised and so interested me in the demeanor and countenance of both Bertha and Lady Hungerford.

I wish I could conclude this episode with satisfaction ; but this the event forbids. Granville, after he got stationary, communicated to Sir Harry all the good wishes of both his old friends, and their readiness to allow him to renew his former habits with them. He was penetrated, and deeply grateful, but said he dared not profit by it while his entanglement with Hortense continued. He would not shock them, he said, by bringing his unworthy person into their presence.

Meantime, all Granville's endeavors to procure the separation so much desired between him and his mistress failed. An immense settlement did not tempt her ; she was about to make him a third time a father, and perceived by its effect upon him what advantage it gave her towards her object. In short, to use his own emphatic words, it plunged him deeper and deeper in the filth of his situation, by clogging more and more his attempts to extricate himself from it ; so that the morals of English society (after all that has been said of our corruptions) not permitting a man with his inconvenient feelings of propriety to show himself here, he fairly renounced his country, and all his brilliant advantages in it, and settled himself at Paris.

There, a complete alien, he found himself without power to turn either his talents or fortune to account abroad, or to obtain peace or comfort from his ill-selected companion at home. On the contrary, his pledges of guilty intercourse (for he would not call it pleasure) increasing, he for their sakes consented, at forty, to marry Hortense, who was as old

as himself, then deprived of all personal attractions, and wholly without power to compensate the loss by any mental endowments.

Their life, therefore, may be imagined. Every thing like attachment having long been over—he despising her, and she never having loved him—their union was a perpetual bickering, and she would now have gladly consented to a separation, provided he would have allowed the children to follow her, which he refused.

But even these, whose education and welfare were the only interests he had left, failed to give him what he thought, as a father he had a right to expect. Not because they had any particular faults of character; on the contrary, they were amiable; but unfortunately this very circumstance made his regrets more poignant. “They are bastards,” said he, “and not presentable in the world; they are not even pledges of love, and therefore give no pleasure at home; their very merits reproach me the more, for having deprived them of their natural rights.”

In this state of mortification he dragged on many years, after being delivered by death from the millstone which had sunk him. But his estates being entailed, he could make no provision for his numerous progeny, except by savings, which he pushed to such an extreme of parsimony, that only with the character of a miser, and a sordid exterior, this once gay, liberal, and accomplished man returned to the hall of his ancestors; where, from long absence, and his misspent life, he found nothing in the respect of friends or neighbors to welcome him home, and looked in vain to the approbation of his own conscience to cheer and console him in his age.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

▲ WEDDING-DAY UNLIKE ALL OTHER WEDDING-DAYS TO BE FOUND IN ROMANCES; HAVING NO SHEW, THOUGH MUCH HAPPINESS.—SWEET CONSCIOUSNESS SHEWN BY BERTHA.

The wedding, mannerly modest.

SHAKSPEARE.—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

I have mark'd

A thousand blushing apparitions

To start into her face; a thousand innocent shames,

In angel whiteness bear-away those blushes.

*Idem.*

THE chronology of facts as they arose, and the importance of the catastrophe of Sir Harry Melford, alone induced me to interrupt the chain of cheerful and happy events which now occupy these memoirs. I with pleasure return, to record the ceremony which united Granville and Lady Hungerford.

From the taste and temper of the parties, and Mr. Hastings' infirm state of health, the wedding and wedding-day of the beloved friends passed rather in happy calm than mirthful exaltation. Though the pattern of elegance and queen of fashion, as I have often called her, Lady Hungerford was attired at the ceremony in the simplicity almost of a village maiden. No pompous ornaments; no laced veils flowing from head to foot, and enveloping her graceful limbs; not even one of her dazzling jewelled bracelets, to outshine and put out of countenance the modest wedding ring, which Granville placed upon her finger. A gown of plain white silk, and a flower in her dark glossy hair, were all the display she chose to make. Her maid, Mrs. Barbara, was by far the most distinguished figure of the two; as (to follow her example) the faithful Margaret was superior to her young mistress, who, as bride's maid, was arrayed in equal simplicity with her friend.

But exclusive of the temper of mind in which those most concerned found themselves, there were no great family feelings or prospects aroused by the event. Granville was no rich heir, to call upon an extended tenantry or neighbourhood of friends to compliment him with joy and jollity on his entering

on his new estate ; and his accomplished and noble wife had been too much used to pomp and festivity not to wish to give play to her natural taste and disposition, which, without hating or despising granduer, were made for something better. She therefore, with her whole heart, preferred the quiet but sincere felicitations of her most beloved friend and her honourable father, to any exuberant display that could be made in compliment to her nuptials. She, however, herself made up for the want of stir and excitement in the adjoining hamlets, by a handsome gift of money, to be distributed to the poorer classes at the discretion of Bertha ; and but for the joy occasioned by this, the church bells, and an ample dinner given by Mr. Hastings to his household, no one could have divined that a peeress had been married that morning to an ambassador of the state.

Strange to say, part of the honey-moon was to be kept in Berkeley Square, owing to the necessity for Granville's preparing for his mission abroad, and they planned, on leaving the church door, to pass some days on the road, in seeing the Dukeries, the wonders of the peak, and the witchery of Warwick Castle. But the great event which I have just recorded, involving so much of the future happiness of one so dear to them both, altered (fortunately for us) the whole of this plan of pleasure, which they generously gave up, that Lady Hungerford might not quit her friend when she most wanted her. The consequence was, that four, or ought I not to say five, happier people never were assembled than the Foljambe mansion saw under its roof during the week succeeding the nuptials.

It may be guessed how that week was passed by us all ; but to me the interests were intense, and not the less because it was then that I learned from the lips of Bertha herself the whole of her story with Prince Adolphus, and was allowed to peruse those interesting letters which so well elucidated it.

An interest still greater was occasioned by Lady Hungerford. For that pattern of a friend having, as she said, been so instrumental in producing the present state of things, declared she could not leave her work incomplete, particularly as she was about to leave us all, perhaps for years. She was, therefore, eager to see things, so happily in train, brought to a still happier conclusion ; and as she was all-powerful with

Mr. Hastings, as well as with Bertha, she did not scruple to propose, and urge to both, with all her talents for persuasion, that a day should be named.

To this the only answer returned by Bertha was by blushes, which Titian would have blessed his good fortune could he have seen; and on the part of Mr. Hastings there was no delay desired except what was in strict reason necessary from settlements, not required, but offered. For as well from my own wishes, as to shorten all delays, I made quick work of it, by desiring every thing I possessed in the world, together with every thing that Bertha might hereafter possess, might not only form her dower, but be hers for ever.

To this, the justice of Mr. Hastings made a large exception, in regard to the estates of Bardolfe and the Grange, which he insisted should be conveyed to my family in default of progeny. And thus days and weeks were spared in this most important matter.

During the interval, I cannot describe the felicity, from their pleasing employments, of every one of the inmates of Foljambe; the visions of happiness of the upper ranks, and the busy importance of the lower, down to the lowest, especially the females. For, from the looks and bustle of even the house and kitchen maids, not to mention the village laundresses, (who only felt a sort of reflected consequence from the hall), you might detect that some event, of a solemn and dignified character, affecting the peace and prosperity of the whole of this little community, was in preparation.

Here the Mesdames Margaret and Barbara naturally took the lead, and enterprises of great pith and moment, *scilicet*, certain daily expeditions to the milliners and mercers at York, —for which purpose, to their no small gratification, I lent them my post-chaise,—engaged the whole force of their genius in the service of their respective mistresses.

For my own part, the happy faces that surrounded me, the pleasure of Mr. Hastings, shewn in a profusion of paternal caresses to the darling and stay of his life, and the joy of our two admirable friends, would have made my heart dilate with pleasure, had there been no other cause for it. But Bertha! my long-loved, long-despaired-of Bertha, now my betrothed as well as beloved! how can I tell the impressions of delight which the mere sight of her speaking animation inspired?

Oh ! how did every look, every blush, every little hesitating, yet a ways graceful, movement speak to me ! She perhaps had not the striking *maintien* of her friend, though the want of that (if it was wanting) was probably alone owing to the circumstance of Lady Hungerford's greater prominence in the world, and the retirement of her own life. But there was a winning softness, and, above all, a consciousness, growing daily and hourly more and more moving, that was absolutely bewitching. That consciousness met me at every turn ; in every look she gave, and every one she endeavoured *not* to give ; in the tones of her voice when she spoke, and the timidity of her eye when she smiled. Oh ; who can tell the charm of this ; or of a cheek, "rosied o'er with the virgin crimson of modesty ?"

Possibly some of my readers, who have been in the same situation, may know what I mean. No others can. For if you ransack the whole history of the human heart, and every scene in which it has shewn itself, you can never discover any thing so intensely, so enchantingly inspiring as that modest consciousness I have mentioned. Hence, perhaps, the most interesting sight in nature is, when a young girl has first disclosed her secret to him whom she has selected to be the ruler of her destiny—the man of her choice—possessing, and worthy of possessing, her love, and enjoying the full approbation of her parents.

Such I had the proud delight of feeling was my situation with Bertha, nor did I think it possible for mental enjoyment to be carried farther.

Here then I stop :—for though the delicious life I afterwards led with her, and the three angels which she gave me, exceeded by far, in real happiness, these moments of excitement, still I am aware of how little comparative interest it will possess for strangers, such probably as those who may think it worth while to read these memoirs. The race over, the enjoyment of the victory becomes tame to the spectators. I will therefore content myself with reporting, that in less than three weeks after the happiness of Granville was secured with his estimable lady, my own was sealed with her lovely pupil, under the auspices and blessing of Fothergill, who came over from Oxford expressly for that purpose.

Mr, Hastings' health alone prevented the fulfilment of his

own and his daughter's wish, that my excellent parents and honest brothers should be present at the ceremony? But at Bertha's desire we soon after paid them a visit of duty, in which, had they been still among the nobility of England, she could not have shown them more deference or attention. My father shed tears, for the first time in his life, at seeing the angel I had brought him. My

"Mother did not speak,  
But she looked in my face, till my heart was like to break,"

not certainly with grief.

It may, I hope, be imagined that I shared some of my prosperity with these worthy relations, who could scarcely be persuaded that the whole was not a dream, till our periodical visit to the old castle, where the lodging fitted up by my revered benefactor, Manners, supplied comfortable accommodation, convinced them that all was real.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### CONCLUSION.

"O! here  
Will I set up my everlasting rest."  
SHAKSPEARE.—*Romeo & Juliet.*

THE rites of the church being performed, and every the fondest wish of my heart fulfilled, I have, as I have said, no more interests worth describing to set before the reader. Yet could I still consume much time and paper, were I to pursue only part of my married life; particularly if I adventured into the wide field of politics which opened at this time, and in the course of a few short months produced the most extraordinary changes, in not only Lord Castleton's relinquishment of power, but his permanent return to it.

But the interest is sped which could alone engage me in this task. I have too long been at anchor to look at storms



without uneasiness, even at a distance. I besides too, thoroughly renounced ambition and the glare of public life, for love and the shades of Foljambe Park, to plunge, though only in memory, into this sort of recital. I will, therefore, content myself with relating how this great change in my life was brought about, in which, I trust, I have not hitherto so ill played my part, that the reader will feel no interest in following me.

It may be supposed that Bertha, that great magnet which had caused all my former activity, or rather that planet which had governed all the vicissitudes of my life, still ruled the changes it underwent, and which caused it to subside into its present happy tranquillity.

At first, the only drawback we felt to the most perfect bliss was, the necessity there was for our often being separated. Mr. Hastings' weak state preventing him from moving from Yorkshire, Bertha could never leave him, and my own duties forced me to London. We both felt the misery of this, and, young as I was, I began to yearn after the far more happy, though less glorious, pursuits that blessed my domestic life. The letters of Bertha almost broke my heart, and I sighed to return to her, even were it at the expense of my office and seat in Parliament.

In this situation I beheld with indifference, as far as they were concerned, if I did not behold with something like pleasure, a heavy storm lowering in the political horizon, which might drive me from office; and all my sorrow as it was, that it would drive my patron from office too. It, however, gave him the opportunity more and more of shewing himself the superior man he was.

The power of the assailants, which, for a time, nothing could withstand, and which in fact stormed the closet of the king, was the consequence of one of those infamous coalitions, in which, to the disgrace of human nature, all the most sacred professions and principles of conduct were broadly and impudently sacrificed, for the sake of obtaining power and pelf.

For a time the assault was irresistible, though Lord Castleton opposed it with firmness and ability, and, to his immortal honour, refused all compromise with his principles, by rejecting with disdain advantageous offers that were made

to join the party coming in. This made him retire, though, with the continued favour of the king and the support of the people, who regarded him with honour, his opponents with indignation. His behaviour under it stamped him with me higher than ever, and only made me laugh at the abuse of the phraseology of historians (surely any thing philosophers), when they call a minister, who loses his office, *disgraced*. Lord Castleton, though overpowered, was nothing but disgraced :

“ What, though the field was lost,  
All was not lost.”

His unconquerable will, and possession of his mind in the case of consistency and patriotism still remained. At first, he had no party to support him against an overbearing aristocracy, and he was completely prepared to carry into effect those sentiments which so charmed me in one of our conversations on the uncertainty and chagrins of power, when he said that one philosophic page read in the closet, with a heart expanding to the wonders and bounties of the Creator, made all the glitter of party success mean in the comparison. When he had therefore retired into private life, as was actually at Castleton, I could not help applying to some of those lines of Pope, as emphatic as well-turned, of another minister, who deserved them, I ween, far less than he :—

“ In vain to deserts thy retreat is made,  
The Muse attends thee in thy silent shade ;  
'Tis her's the brave man's latest steps to trace,  
Rejudge his acts, and dignify disgrace.  
When int'rest calls off all her sneaking train,  
And all the obliged desert, and all the vain ;  
Ev'n now she shades thy evening walks with bays,  
(No hireling she, no prostitute to praise) ;  
Ev'n now, observant of the parting ray,  
Eyes the calm sunset of thy various day,  
Through fortune's cloud, one truly great shall see,  
Nor fears to tell that Castleton is he.”

Unfortunately, however, for the glory of my patron's marlborough, though the firmness he displayed in the first shock of the promise of his going through with it, the time of probability was too short to complete his pretensions. For his oppo-

nents, drunk with their victory, like other drunken men, could not contain themselves, but, in the pride and confidence of their hearts, meditated no less than to deprive the crown of its constitutional power; for which they were justly hurled from their own. The consequence was, the return of Lord Castleton to his former post, and an invitation to me to return to mine.

What might have been the event, had we been all living during the interval in London, plunged with the rest of my party in the struggle that was going on, I do not know. But as it was, we had been leading so heavenly a life, all in all to each other, that to forego it, and, as it were, re-enter a world of strangers, suited not the taste of either Bertha or myself. My own resolution was not indeed so determined as her's, and was just so far balanced that the least-favouring incident might decide it one way or the other. That incident was not wanting; yet was it of the simplest, and, as may be thought of the commonest kind, though it possessed my whole heart at the time; and, as these memoirs have been little more than a picture of that heart, I know not that I can make a better close than by relating it.

The proposal from Lord Castleton had been brought us by the post. Bertha and Mr. Hastings declared they would have no voice in it—that they would not be even consulted, but all should be left to myself. Bertha even affected to be indifferent to a permanent remove from Foljambe, which it was agreed would be necessary if I accepted. Nobody, however, had spoken, and there had been a conscious silence for an hour, when we proceeded to take our usual walk.

It was an almost night-walk in sweetest summer. The evening had stolen luxuriously on our senses; the turf was like velvet to our feet; the gardens shed a thousand balms through the air; all our thoughts were at home.

Our way lay along the margin of the lake, immoveable from the stillness, and just reflecting the taller trees in the soft tints of twilight. Some thirty or forty deer had come down to the water-side, to drink, and repose for the night. The freshness, sweetness, and quiet of the scene, reminded me of the description of that season “wherein our Saviour’s birth is celebrated,” when, as it is held,

"The bird of dawning singeth all night long,  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad ;  
The nights are wholesome ; then no planets strike,  
Nor faery takes, nor witch hath pow'r to charm :  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

My bosom expanded with a pleasure indescribable, but of the purest kind ; gratitude, as well as joy in a lot which had indeed fallen upon me in a goodly ground. Could I think of parting with it, even had I been alone ? But the partner of my mind and the adored of my heart hung on my arm. She, too, was informed with the same feelings ; she, too, revelled in such a scene, an equal votary of heaven, herself lovelier than any of heaven's works.

Neither of us spoke or attempted to describe what we felt. The purest joys, indeed, are generally silent. Each sought happiness from the book of nature, and each read the other's feelings in that silent book.

Consentaneously we embraced. I pressed her to my heart ; and on her lips "sucked the honey of her music vows ;" in the midst of which a low whisper stole on my ear—"Promise not to take me from this place—promise to renounce ambition, and let me be your only mistress."

I promised ; and if ever there were minds mingled together, it was ours at that instant, when we were so united in this sentiment, that angels might have thought there were moments, even upon earth, which might equal their own.

Have I explained why, from that instant, I did as I promised, renounce ambition, and offered it at the shrine of domestic happiness,

"Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,  
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,  
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven."

THE END.

